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# "A SECOND THEBAID:"

## BEING A POPULAR ACCOUNT OF THE ANCIENT MONASTERIES OF IRELAND.

BY

THE REV. JAMES P. RUSHE, O.D.C.,

Author of "Carmel in Ireland."

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# PREFACE.

WE are told that Ireland was known as "A Second Thebaid" even in the earlier ages of Christianity; and that the number and fame of the religious institutions throughout the country further established the nation's claim to so glorious a title in after times. But this claim seems to have been neglected by later generations, owing chiefly, perhaps, to the want of information, in narrative form, concerning very many of our ancient monasteries. In the hope of reviving an interest in a title highly revered by our ancestors, I have undertaken to supply this want from the various sources of Irish Monastic History: telling as simply as I possibly can what I have read about those numerous homes of holiness and learning—suppressed, for the most part, by the end of the sixteenth century.

Although the scope of my task is, strictly speaking, limited to the foundations dating from the great revival of Monasticism in the Irish Church; still the subject could hardly be considered complete without some reference to our more ancient sanctuaries, and to their saintly founders. The first three chapters are, accordingly, devoted to this purpose; in order that the reader may, also, have an opportunity of judging how Ireland became entitled, in the beginning, to be recognised as "another Thebaid."[1]

J. P. R.

[1] "Histoire Monastique d'Irlande." (Alemand: Paris, 1690), p. 4.

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* From oil-paintings—early XVIII. century—in the monastery of the Discalced Carmelites at Piacenza.

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# "A SECOND THEBAID."

## CHAPTER I.

### MONASTICISM IN THE EARLY IRISH CHURCH.

THAT vast wilderness in Egypt known as the Thebaid (Higher and Lower—the former including Tabenne, a little above the first cataract of the Nile) was made immortal by the sanctity of a great multitude of people who lived there in the very first ages of the Christian era. They had been drawn thither by the wondrous attraction of the Cross, a stumbling block to the pride of human wisdom, so intolerant of this new doctrine which was thus more perfectly put in practice by the followers of the Crucified. For the Saviour's own death on Calvary gave an entirely different significance to penance and humble submission to the Higher Will; and the hearts of many, long yearning for some better hope, found peace and contentment in obeying those precepts totally opposed to the very inclinations which men are least willing to restrain. The world at large, ever slow to take this lesson to heart, did not grow more eager now, when in the light of Christian Faith thousands of earnest men and women, fearful of their own weakness and of the perils of this life, fled to those Eastern Deserts;[1] in order to carry out the teaching of their Divine Master—devoting themselves unceasingly

[1] "The Monks of the West." (Montalembert: London, 1861), vol. i., p. 314.

to the exercise of mortification and prayer. The memory of many of them is commemorated in the Church; while countless others, whose names do not appear in our Calendars, are venerated and invoked among the myriads of unknown Saints.

Of course the world, seeing itself forsaken by even its own once favoured votaries, condemned this "folly of the Cross"; and persecutions arose against the holy solitaries, numbers of whom were called upon to shed their blood in testimony of the Christian Faith. And such were the victories then achieved for the Church by those her fervent children, that the hearts of the Faithful throughout Christendom thrill with pious emotion to the present day at mere mention of the name of the Thebaid.

This flight of God's servants from the world had been foreshadowed under the Dispensation of the Old Law, when the more fervent of the Faithful of Israel lived up to the mystical sign of Circumcision, studying to keep their hearts detached from the things that pass with time. They, too, lived away from their fellow-men among the mountains and in desert places, sanctifying themselves by the duty of prayer, while awaiting the fulfilment of that Divine promise which implied the Redemption of the human race. Mount Carmel, in Palestine, became the chosen retreat of many of these devout hermits; because the Prophet Elias abode there, and he was their master in the spiritual life.[2] Such were the virtues practised by that "Man of God" and his school of "the famous hermits of Carmel" that the very mountain itself came to be regarded as the type of exalted sanctity. Prayer and zeal were the characteristics of their spirit; and this retirement from the world the means which they adopted in order

[2] Ven. P. Thomas à Jesu. (*Opera Omnia:* Cologne, 1684), T. I., p. 404 *sq.*

to attain to their ideal of perfection. In after ages their example, in both respects, was earnestly emulated by the Monks of the Thebaid, who had embraced the Counsels of the Christian Religion. We are assured, moreover, that the very first monastic Rule embodied many of the pious traditions handed down from the time of the Prophet Elias and his disciples; suggesting, as these traditions do, the most effective methods of acquiring the spirit of zeal and prayer. And here it is necessary to say that the Rule thus essentially constituted has been adopted, from the beginning, by a Religious body existing in the Church from the remotest ages; whose members claim St. Elias himself as their holy Founder: not vainly to extol the antiquity of their Order, as some critics of the Carmelites idly suppose; but rather to insist upon the origin which history assigns to a calling so sublime—the vocation, also, of the first Bishop sent from Rome to preach the Faith in Ireland. For a most reliable authority informs us that Palladius was a member of one of the Carmelite communities in the East; having been trained in monastic discipline by several of the Fathers of the renowned Thebaid.[3]

Various points relating to this mission of St. Palladius are made subjects of controversy among Irish historians; but all agree as to the fact of his having come to the country prior to the time of St. Patrick.[4] Most writers are strangely silent concerning the earlier career of Palladius, preferring to begin with that epoch in his life when he was commissioned by Pope Celestine to undertake the work reserved by Divine Providence for the zeal of our national Apostle. Happily, however,

[3] "Decor Carmeli." (P. Philippi a SS. Trinitate: Lyons, 1665), P. I., p. 82. The Author would have what is here stated read in connection with his remarks on the same subject in another place (Chapter XIV)—relying chiefly for the authenticity of his assertions on the authority of the learned Father Philip of the Blessed Trinity.—J. P. R.

[4] "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland." (Lanigan: Dublin, 1829), V. I., p. 37.

a short but extremely important biography of the holy Bishop has been left us by an author of great learning and most diligent research, who, having had occasion to interest himself in our Irish annals, gained access to sources of authentic information within the reach of evidently but few of his contemporary historians of the seventeenth century ; and which not many subsequent writers appear to have been able to consult. According to Father Philip of the Blessed Trinity, Palladius, who from his boyhood seems to have been under the direction of a very holy ecclesiastic, embraced the monastic state when only in the twentieth year of his age. Having come with his master to Jerusalem from Constantinople he joined the Carmelite community there in the monastery of St. Anne, governed at that time by John, afterwards Patriarch of the Holy City.

A custom then existed in the monasteries of the East of granting permission to the religious to visit other communities, in order that the monks everywhere might have the benefit of the personal direction of the great masters of the spiritual life. So, having satisfied his superiors with the progress which he had made in the monastic virtues during the time of his probation at St. Anne's, Palladius was allowed, and encouraged, to undertake a journey into the deserts of Egypt. He did so ; and made a lengthy stay among the solitaries of the Thebaid. He was instructed in the working of the monastic system by the great St. Pachomius himself, and by others of the "Fathers of the Desert" —some of whom had several thousand monks under their immediate control at the same time. Palladius there witnessed not alone the marvels of holiness that were causing the whole world to resound with the fame of the Thebaid, but beheld the extraordinary fruits of the labours of those colonies of Saints, whose industry made the wilderness appear to

visitors as a hive of bees. Withdrawal from the world by no means implied forgetfulness of the needs of their fellow-men on the part of the monks, whose charity and generosity inspired the very Pagans with a reverence for the Christian Faith. As a matter of fact, no other social influence of that remote age did so much for the progress of civilization as the unwearying efforts of those self-sacrificing denizens of both Thebaids. The time not spent in prayer was devoted either to study or manual labour; so that not only were there to be found among them the most learned men of those times, but numbers of "weavers, carpenters, curriers, tailors and fullers"—exercising their respective crafts for the brethren of the different communities, and equally for the poor, for pilgrims, and for strangers."[5] There were hospitals for the infirm, for lepers, and for cripples: even little children had a special home of their own there in time of sickness, wherein they received all the tenderness of a loving mother's care.

St. Pachomius required his monks—at one time there were as many as fifty thousand solitaries subject to the holy abbot's rule—to be able to read and write, in order that they might comply with the strict obligation of studying the Holy Scriptures. Not that their attention was confined to Biblical knowledge alone: the Thebaid became a very treasury of "varied learning"—those who had gained most renown in the famous schools of Alexandria seeking wisdom, after their conversion to the Faith, from the "Fathers of the Desert." There, too, St. Athanasius found his most powerful auxiliaries in the cause of Orthodoxy, renewing his own courage and strength among them by lengthy retreats. Another great Doctor of the Church—St. John Chrysostom, whose intimate friendship Palladius enjoyed, and whose

[5] "The Monks of the West," vol. i., pp. 317-319.

cause he warmly defended [6]—thus speaks of the monks from personal experience: "Go to the Thebaid: you shall find there a solitude more beautiful than Paradise; a thousand choirs of angels under human form; nations of martyrs; armies of virgins; the tyrant demon powerless, and Christ gloriously triumphant." [7]

Having passed through this school of holiness, and with a heart inflamed by the zeal that is the fruit of contemplative prayer, Palladius set out for Rome, and offered himself for the perilous mission to Ireland. Hence we may be prepared to find a very striking evidence of the self-same spirit of monasticism pervading the history of the early Irish Church. For, waiving the question of the time which Palladius spent in Ireland, Father Philip of the Blessed Trinity insists not alone on the fact of the holy Bishop having established those churches to which our national annalists allude, but on his having founded, moreover, a number of monastic institutions according to the mode of life followed in the Deserts of Egypt and Palestine.[8] Indeed, there are writers who maintain that the Irish people were, from the beginning, almost instinctively predisposed to this austere form of asceticism—so earnest were they to attain to the sublime ideals of Christianity.

Although the Druids had still great influence over the native princes, much success seems to have attended the efforts of Palladius and his companion missionaries on their first coming to the country. The Pagans were amazed and terrified at seeing the demons of idolatry vanquished by the simple Sign of the Cross, which, remembering the advice given him by the holy abbot Dorotheus—whose disciple he had been in the Thebaid—Palladius instantly set up in the place chosen

[6] "Decor Carmeli," P. I., p. 83.
[7] Hom. VIII. In S. Matt.
[8] "Decor Carmeli," Vita S. Palladii, p. 85.

for the celebration of the Divine Mysteries. Here, too, he chanted the Psalms with his monks, in conformity to the liturgy long observed among the hermits of Carmel, who had themselves received it from the Evangelist, St. Mark. And thus in the nascent Irish Church we find repeated some of the most thrilling episodes in the history of those sacred Eastern solitudes: when the fervent Christians who had, at the preaching of St. Palladius, already embraced the monastic state came together after the day's hard toil to sing the Divine praises from the Psalter—the entire of which each monk could recite from memory—until the country-side resounded with a multitude of voices consecrated to God in the service of prayer.

So great was the progress made by Palladius in his mission, that a report reached Rome to the effect of his having converted the whole of Ireland to the Faith but at the very time the Eternal City was rejoicing in this victory of his zeal, the holy Bishop had been driven from the country by the malice and envy of the Druids. However, this persecution failed in its purpose; for before his departure, Palladius had charged a number of his disciples—who were unknown to the Pagan priests—to remain with the Faithful of the Irish Church: to attend to their spiritual needs; and especially to encourage those bound by the monastic vows to persevere in their vocation. Several of our annalists hold that the Saint did not long survive his expulsion from Ireland, having died, probably, in the year 432; others are of opinion that he lived to render the Church most fruitful services both in Britain and Scotland.[9]

In saying that he was the first Bishop sent from Rome to Ireland, the historians are still doubtful as to whether

[9] "History of the Irish Hierarchy" (Rev. T. Walsh: New York, 1855), p. 5. "Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum" (Dr. Healy: Dublin, 1893), p. 150. Lanigan, vol. i., p. 22.

Palladius had any predecessors in the sacred ministry in this country. Father Philip of the Blessed Trinity does not appear to think so; not that he advances any reasons to the contrary; seeing that Irish merchants used to trade with foreign nations even in far earlier ages; while in their raids on the neighbouring coasts the native chieftains might have easily carried off Bishops or priests among their other Christian captives. But it is to Palladius we are indebted for having prepared the way for St. Patrick's grand apostolate; and for having given to the Irish Church those traditions of the spiritual life, which, as we shall presently see, caused the halo of sanctity, shining over those Eastern Deserts, to be reflected, and with added lustre, in our "Second Thebaid."

And this was how Monasticism became inaugurated in Ireland. Despite the persevering hostility of the Druids to those professing the True Faith, the followers of Palladius kept the light of Christianity burning in the country until the advent of St. Patrick, who found many of the Irish already well instructed in the Gospel; meeting in his frequent journeys devout men engaged in the practice of the religious life quite as fervently and exactly as he himself had seen it observed in those famous communities abroad wherein he had acquired the spirit of zeal which was now to insure the conversion of the entire nation. It is even said that his missionary labours were shared by some of those faithful disciples of Palladius.[10] We may judge his own appreciation of the monastic life from the fact of the bitter complaint made by the Druids to their royal patrons: that St. Patrick's preaching was inducing the children of the Irish kings and princes to lose all interest in the glories and pleasures extolled by the national bards—leading them on to aspire to an invisible reward which the

[10] Lanigan, vol. i., p. 22.

Pagan sages found it impossible to understand. And when we are told that the fame of some holy hermit attracted crowds of the pious Faithful to his lonely retreat, in order that they might advance in virtue under his guidance, we have, practically, assigned for us the origin of those renowned seminaries of sanctity which first made Ireland more generally known to Christendom as "another Thebaid": furnishing examples of penance as marvellous as the edifying lives of the Fathers of the Desert; and consoling the Church for the havoc wrought by heresy and schism in the East, where the former glory of Monasticism was, by this time (A.D. 432-451) on the wane.[11] Such was the beginning of our ancient monastic Schools, each of whose holy founders framed a set code of observances for his own particular followers; but prayer and mortification always formed the basis of the special mode of life enjoined, the rest being regarded as mere matters of detail, and deemed important only in relation to the grand purpose in view: the personal sanctification of those called to "the Better Part" of Evangelical perfection.

Mention is made of twelve distinct Rules of this kind, dating from either the fifth or sixth century, and as many as eight of these are said to be still extant, written in the original Irish. Each bears the name of the great Saint responsible for the particular method of monastic discipline; and common to all are statutes prescribing very severe penalties for even the slightest faults committed against the holy Rule. But in this we recognise the zealous Founder's solicitude for the spiritual welfare of those who had placed themselves under his care; for thus would he impress upon them how seriously they were to regard whatsoever might hinder their progress in the way of virtue.

[11] "The Monks of the West," vol. i., p. 373.

The countless souls sanctified by the profession of Monasticism in the early Irish Church had, for the most part, adopted one or other of these twelve Rules as a means of insuring Divine favour; attracted in each case, no doubt, by the renown of that master in asceticism, whose teaching appealed more forcibly to the wants and aspirations of the individual heart. Although the underlying essential principles—presupposing a horror of worldliness and the love of retirement for the purpose of penance and prayer—gave a certain sameness to these monastic Codes; still they differed considerably in various respects, modified by those laudable customs established conformably to the requirements of Canon Law. Nevertheless, we find the Rule of St. Columba containing not a few ordinances—most strikingly those relating to the virtues of obedience and silence—which read almost word for word with the corresponding chapters in what is now known as "the Primitive Carmelite Rule"—substantially the same as that observed by Palladius and his companions while members of the community in the monastery of St. Anne.[12] A very learned writer on the subject informs us that this "Primitive Rule" is but a summary of the original monastic Code, written in Greek, which had been followed by those "famous hermits of Carmel" even long before the time of St. Basil.[13]

Hence, instead of entering upon a critical analysis of their Rules, it will prove more interesting to the general reader to dwell briefly on the life of each of our holy Founders; making passing reference, in a subsequent chapter, to the better known, more ancient sanctuaries of our Western Thebaid. So, too, shall we

[12] "Ven. P. Thomas à Jesu," T. I., pp. 465, 474.

[13] The Ven. Thomas of Jesus, to whom Bossuet alludes as "a profound theologian, and sublime ascetic"; and for whose learning Bellarmin expressed the highest esteem.

have an opportunity of witnessing certain phases of one glorious effect of those different Codes of Monasticism in the Irish Church : the production of that threefold order of saints—comprising three hundred and fifty holy Bishops, the Founders of churches and schools, who shone, in virtue, like the sun ; another three hundred priests and prelates, whose holiness was bright as the moon ; and a hundred more hermit-bishops and priests with sanctity compared to the aurora. Yet all these blessed ones were few relatively to the myriads of Irish men and women who became Saints under the guidance of these same holy Founders, whose words of wisdom were grateful to kings and heroes as well as to the lowliest in the land.

Before his death, St. Patrick was favoured with a vision of the holiness and learning which, in after ages, should flourish in the Irish Church : first he saw the whole island splendidly illumined ; then only the mountains made bright ; and finally but lamps, as it were, shining in the valleys. Surely a beautiful allegory of the country,[14] either when Monasticism was really the serious study of innumerable Irishmen's lives ; or at an epoch when, notwithstanding the sad troubles of the times, many monasteries were founded to become schools of sanctity and learning ; and, perhaps, a figure of Ireland in this later age, likewise : seeing how the lamp of asceticism has been kept burning in our midst throughout so long and drear a night of persecution. The ideals of Monasticism are quite as effectively attractive to-day as in that far off time when the Faithful came in crowds to be taught the secret of holiness and happiness by a St. Finnian of Clonard, or a St. Ciaran of Clonmacnoise.

Several centuries before the monks of our Western

[14] "Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum," p. 108.

Thebaid were called upon to enter the arena with the royal heresiarch, whom we shall see vainly striving to make them the creatures of his will, the Irish Church had already undergone another fierce struggle to which, in the course of our narrative, we shall often have painful occasion to allude; quoting from our ancient annals the frequent ruthless invasion of monasteries, and monastic cities—for flourishing towns had sprung up around those homes of prayer—by the barbarous Danes. But the mere fact of the dread event is mentioned, leaving the imagination to picture what must have taken place when the sacred silence of the cloister was interrupted by the furious outcry of the spoilers—enraged at finding no plunder among those friends and benefactors of the poor. It was then that many of our glorious host of Irish martyrs gained the crown. We must refer, also, to those deeds of heroic patriotism which checked the progress of the Danish invasion, until the barbarians themselves submitted at length to the sweet yoke of the Christian Faith: yielding more readily to the influence of Ireland's missionary monks, than to the valour of those whose duty it was to defend their country by the sword. Other invaders—the Anglo-Normans—followed; and, although Christians themselves in name, plundered and destroyed many of our ancient sanctuaries—perpetrating those deeds for which they would afterwards atone, in part, by founding monasteries destined to transmit to future ages every venerated tradition of our Irish Thebaid.

## CHAPTER II.

### "THE TWELVE HOLY FOUNDERS."

IT is by no means certain that St. Patrick gave a formal monastic Rule to his disciples; still the annalists allow him first place amongst our Holy Founders; and this most fittingly, because of the various monastic schools which the Saint is known to have established; as well as by reason of those "Canons" designed to regulate the mode of life of the Irish clergy generally, and undoubtedly calculated to foster the spirit of true Monasticism.[1] As for his own fervour in this respect, we can only compare him to the great Prophet Elias, in whose grand career there are certain events vividly recalled by incidents in the life of our national Apostle. St. Patrick's fearlessness before the Druids forcibly reminds us of the burning zeal of the Thesbite in his struggle with the priests of Baal; while it was to prayer alone, whether on Carmel or at Tara, that either Saint owed his wondrous power. Both were, likewise, animated by a tenderest charity towards the poor and afflicted, ever displaying a speedy practical sympathy in the case of those wrongfully oppressed.

There is ample evidence in the "Canons" to show that St. Patrick, also, would have prayer and zeal the essential features in the spirit of the servants of the Sanctuary. Of course his own earlier associations furnish an argument for his thus wishing to have Monasticism, in its most rigid acceptation, enter into

[1] Alemand, p. 19. Lanigan, vol. i., p. 312.

the lives of those called to the service of the Altar; setting aside his anxiety to see perpetuated in the Irish Church those traditions of eminent holiness which had edified him in foreign monasteries, and which he rejoiced to find so fervently practised by the disciples of Palladius.

St. Patrick was only in the sixteenth year of his age when taken to Ireland, as a slave, by one of those chieftains who were wont to raid the coasts of Britain and France. Already highly cultured in other respects, the Irish people were wanting, at that epoch, in the truer civilization effected among nations by the practice of Christianity. He spent fully six years in a state of cruel servitude, deprived of every means of acquiring human learning, but making rapid daily progress in the science of the Saints by exercising himself in those simple lessons of virtue taught him in his childhood by his pious parents, Calphurnius and Conchessa. At length he escaped to France, where he placed himself under the guidance of his maternal uncle, the grea St. Martin of Tours. Later on he passed some considerable time with St. German of Auxerre; and, subsequently, among the monks of St. Honoratus in the Isle of Lerins.[2] Such were but a few of the opportunities which our Saint had of becoming thoroughly grounded in the principles of the monastic life as inculcated by those renowned holy masters; so that it was another monk-bishop that came to perfect the work of Palladius in Ireland, some time in the year 432. Pope St. Celestine was the Pontiff who authorized our Apostle to undertake the grand enterprise, confident of the fruit of Patrick's spirit of zeal. The Saint was accompanied on his mission by several fervent companions, who rejoiced with him on discovering the heritage of Palladius to the Christians already in Ireland: that

[2] Lanigan, vol. i., ch. iv., p. 155, *sq.*

bond of holiness between the future "Thebaid of the West" and those Eastern Deserts which had been the seminary of so many famous Saints.

In the success of St. Patrick's mission—the conversion of an entire nation to the Faith—we may well pause to consider the power of zeal and prayer. For the difficulties with which he had to contend—chiefly owing to the passionate attachment of the people to their Pagan customs—called for the exercise of something more than mere human energy. Every effort of the Saint—whether in dealing with the people, or their princes; with the Druids, or with the Bards, those jealous guardians of the nation's ancient fame—was, moreover, a further proof of that far-seeing prudence which not alone provided for the pressing needs of his own day; but set a safeguard for all time over the treasure of the Faith then bestowed upon Ireland. And just as his persevering fervour removed the obstacles in his path; so, in the end, his gentleness enabled him to win over his most inveterate enemies to the cause of Truth.

The people soon saw that he had not come to impose a burden upon them such as the wily Druids would lead them to think; but rather to show them how true happiness is to be had even in this life, the surety of an eternal hope. If St. Patrick uttered terrifying threats of a Divine chastisement, it was only against sin and error; hearts yearning for the Truth which he preached found the utmost solace in his encouraging words—so well did his conduct verify the significance of the beautiful name which he bore: "the Father of the Poor." And now enriched by the gift of Faith, many of his converts would prove their gratitude by obeying the Evangelical Counsels, also; the noblest among the children of the Irish offering this practical testimony of their consistency in the exercise of Christian Belief. If nothing could

excel the promised reward, neither might any sacrifice made to attain it be deemed too great.

About the year 450, St. Patrick was inspired to found the Primatial See of the Irish Church, and the once famed monastic school of Armagh. Heretofore his disciples, anxious to benefit by his teaching and example, were wont, as a rule, to accompany him from place to place. But now Armagh became the recognised centre of the Saint's zeal, influencing the lives of those who dwelt there until their renown for holiness and wisdom drew multitudes of earnest students from the remotest regions of the earth, yielding ready obedience to the Bishop appointed to govern both See and monastery in St. Patrick's name. The labours of our Saint did not cease with the establishment of Armagh; even in his old age—the year 465 was, probably, the date of his death—he had to face trials and troubles that rendered his life a very martyrdom. However, he succeeded, by degrees, in bringing the ecclesiastical affairs of Ireland into most striking harmony with the usages of the universal Church. In his well-known "Confession before Death" St. Patrick affords us a far clearer insight into his own character than we can derive from the numerous books written to record his life and labours: the out-pouring of a heart inflamed with Divine love; but, as in the case of the Prophet Elias—for whom our Saint cherished a deep devotion [3]—grief-stricken because of his powerlessness to prevent the injuries daily offered by the wicked to the Most High.

Some writers assert that Saint Ailbe of Emly actually preceded our national Apostle in the labours of the Irish Episcopacy; but it is far more probable that he was one of St. Patrick's disciples, entering upon the duties assigned to him by his holy master some time about the

[3] "Speculum Carmeli," T. I., nn. 211, 457. Walsh, p. 189. Lanigan, V. I., p. 23.

ST. PATRICK'S VISION OF THE PROPHET ELIAS. (p. 16.)

year 445.[4] At all events, St. Ailbe's name frequently occurs in our Annals as one of the monastic Founders—"a Father of the Early Irish Church"; but very little is known for certain concerning his career. It would seem that it was his pious ambition to devote himself entirely to the eremitical mode of life in some lonely retreat far away from Munster, his native-place; yet he humbly submitted his own inclinations to the will of others, being especially desirous of complying with the wishes of the holy king Ængus—who had most loyally assisted St. Patrick when in the South of Ireland. Hence we find St. Ailbe Bishop of the See of Emly, and founder of a great monastic school there. Prevented himself from undertaking a mission to Iceland, he sent thither a colony of zealous disciples whose spirit had been formed according to the Rule compiled by St. Ailbe for those who would place themselves under his spiritual guidance.

St. Declan of Ardmore is another of our holy Founders said to have been a Bishop in Ireland prior to the time of St. Patrick. But neither in this instance are we furnished with any satisfactory reasons for the assertion: not, as we have seen, that the fact is in itself intrinsically improbable. Nor are the more reliable authorities by any means inclined to consider a very ancient life of this Saint authentic. Still all agree in testifying to his marvellous holiness, dwelling particularly on his spirit of humility and lowly submission, although a scion of the "noble Desii," and notwithstanding all he had done for the nascent Irish Church. Among the most fruitful of his labours was the training of so many zealous disciples in his monastery at Ardmore. The calm of their beloved retreats seems to pervade the brief

[4] See the account of St. Patrick's appeal to the Prophet Elias in the "Florilegium Insulae Sanctorum" (Vita S. Patritii, chap. xix., p. 10): Paris, 1624.

narratives of our Saints ; causing us almost to forget at times that in their days, even as in our own, there were absorbing interests at issue in the world without the cloister : compared with which, very often, the most revolutionary changes of modern history hardly appear important. Still mere temporal affairs were for St. Declan and his holy contemporaries but the passing vanities of this life ; only what related to the soul claimed their earnest attention at all.

A prominent place is given to St. Columba amongst our Irish monastic legislators : both by reason of the number of religious establishments founded by him, and because of the influence of his spirit on his own and subsequent ages. The scope of our task does not admit of anything like a satisfactory account of this great Saint's career ; so we must confine ourselves to a few of the events in his marvellous life more directly pertinent to our purpose. Born at Gartan, county Donegal, about the year 521, St. Columba was of the royal race of Nial of the Nine Hostages. When only in the twenty-second year of his age, he was already recognised as one of "the Apostles of Erin," while from earliest childhood it could be seen that he was destined to add lustre to the Irish Church by his wisdom and sanctity. He was still quite a young man when he established the monastic school of Derry, which became eventually so renowned ; and several other famous monasteries of Ireland also claimed him as their Founder. But it is with Iona that Columba's name is most lovingly associated ; having chosen that island as the place of his exile, in order to expiate the deed of vengeance taken by his kinsmen upon those from whom our Saint had received a grievous injury. We can better appreciate the merit of this great act of atonement, by remembering Columba's passionate love of his native land ; the penalty was, we are assured, a thousand times worse than the bitterness

of death to him; still he endured it heroically for a term of forty years, his heart ever yearning for even one glimpse of the Irish shore. Much as has been written on the life and works of St. Columba, we are left to seek the secret of his influence in that persevering correspondence with grace, which enabled him to overcome every natural inclination that might hinder his daily progress in Christian perfection; implying, of course, a great love of those dread austerities so unceasingly practised by all our Irish Saints.

Next, in order, comes the name of St. Comgall, of Bangor, in the county Down. He was born in the year 516, and died, probably, A.D. 601. So rapidly did the renown of his monastery spread abroad that he had soon no less than three thousand fervent disciples under his immediate charge. No doubt the love of learning brought many to the famed school of Bangor; but we are expressly told that the chief attraction of the place lay in the holiness of its inmates—excelling in obedience and humility, of which beautiful virtues St. Comgall himself gave the most striking example. Having studied the Science of the Saints in various other monasteries, this holy Founder embodied in his own Rule a number of the pious customs which he had seen observed elsewhere; and some of these, like parts of St. Columba's monastic Code, forcibly recall the mode of life led from the beginning by the Hermits of Mount Carmel.[5]

Another feature in the Monasticism of the early Irish Church reminding us of life in the Eastern Thebaid, was the custom of freely allowing the monks—especially the younger—to pay lengthy visits to different monasteries in order that they might have as many opportunities as possible of profiting by the example of those already

[5] Compare "Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum," ch. xvi., p. 365. "The Monks of the West," vol. i., bk. ii., p. 287. "Thomas à Jesu," v. i., p. 450.

proficients in the spiritual life. Among the many who had come to Bangor with this end in view was a relative of St. Comgall, named Carthach—also one of our Holy Founders. He is now more generally known as St. Mochuda; having been so called by his master, St. Carthach the Elder. It is said that Ireland might well be deemed at the zenith of its fame for holiness and learning when this St. Mochuda, or Carthach the Younger, founded his monastic school in the territory of the Desii, county Waterford. Born in the year 560, he first achieved much renown by the establishment of his great monastery at Rahan, county Meath, where he himself passed forty years of his saintly life. But it would appear that the jealousy of the people of this district was at length aroused; they regarded the Saint and his monks as strangers; so, for the sake of peace, Mochuda departed thence in his old age in search of a more tranquil retreat. On hearing how badly the holy man had been treated by the people of Meath, the reigning prince of the Desii invited him to his own country, telling him to enclose as much land as he pleased for a new monastery. The Saint gladly availed himself of such pious generosity; and, with his companions, at once set about raising the usual "lios" or mound, which marked off the claustral boundary in those days. While thus engaged, a holy virgin named Cornelli, who dwelt close by, came and asked them what they were doing there? "Only making this little mound" (*lios beg*), replied Mochuda. The holy virgin, enlightened by a prophetic vision of the future fame of the monastic school which was to spring up in that place, told him to call it rather a great mound (*lios mohr*); and out of respect for her sanctity St. Mochuda complied: hence the once world-renowned name of Lismore.

At that time, and, indeed, for some centuries later on, the monastic buildings were very rarely, if at all,

of an imposing kind. Having marked out the precincts of what was to be their future home by the *lios* or mound, the monks, under the direction of their master in the spiritual life—as in the instance of St. Mochuda and his disciples—built themselves rude huts within this sacred enclosure. The church or oratory was in the centre, so that the monastery thus established was like the "Laura" of the Eastern Thebaid; and must have borne a striking resemblance to the ancient "Deserts" of Carmel, according to the plan of which, in so far as circumstances would allow, the Ven. Thomas of Jesus inaugurated those solitary retreats among the Teresian Carmelites, wherein members of the Order might, with their Superior's permission, lead a strictly eremitical mode of life.[6] These primitive monastic institutions were most simply constructed here in Ireland; stone being seldom used in the rearing of either the church or cells. The edifice of sanctity in their own souls gave the holy monks most anxious concern; and in later ages when the ancient sanctuaries were replaced by the monasteries, of which now only the ruins remain, we invariably find that the style of architecture adopted was such as would lend itself most freely to the sublime mystical interpretation of those ideals of spirituality which the earnest Christian keeps constantly in view.[7]

St. Mochuda survived the establishment of Lismore but two years. Still within that brief interval a great city appeared there to replace the original *lios;* fully one-half of the same being strictly cloistered, solely peopled by the monks. Meanwhile, our Saint himself had retired to a solitary cave to prepare more perfectly

[6] Walsh, p. 684. "Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum," p. 94.

[7] Judging from the plates in the works of both Ledwich (Dublin, A.D. 1790) and Grose (London, A.D. 1791) on the "Antiquities of Ireland," it is easy to see how much these ruined monasteries have suffered during the past hundred years. Compare, also, the engravings in Bartlett's "Scenery and Antiquities of Ireland"—(London: George Virtue. No date).

for death. He would have remained there to the end; but the "Seniors" of the monastery—themselves enfeebled by age and infirmities—were wont to consult him frequently in person; and in order to spare them the labour of coming to his retreat, very difficult of approach, he decided on returning to Lismore. As his beloved disciples were bearing him down the rugged pathway, he begged them to administer the Last Sacraments to him; and immediately afterwards expired in view of the monastery so dear to him in life. And thus in his very agony he gave a touching example of that spirit of charity which had been so lovable a trait in his grand character, and which pervades his holy Rule—probably the best authenticated of the eight extant Irish monastic Codes. Besides the usual ordinances relating to the spiritual progress of the monks, St. Mochuda furnishes many practical instructions for Bishops, Superiors, and Priests—giving to the latter the beautiful title of "Friend of the Soul." His exhortations on the worthy offering of "the Body of the Great King" are such as to excite tenderest devotion to the "Great Lord of our Altars"; indicating at the same time the surest cause of the wondrous holiness that flourished at Lismore.[8]

St. Molua (A.D. 559), also one of our Irish Founders, was another of St Comgall's disciples, who had his Rule sanctioned by the authority of Pope Gregory the Great: "Surely this is a means," the holy Pontiff is said to have exclaimed, "to guide its loyal followers to God!" One of its most striking characteristics is the extreme rigour with which "the law of the cloister" was enforced. The founding of as many as one hundred monasteries during his own life-time is attributed to St. Molua, the most important being that established by the Saint

[8] Walsh, pp. 239, 379.

at Clonfert-Mulloe in the Queen's County; although he himself would have chosen a site in his native-place, somewhere in the county Limerick.[9]

A Briton, by birth, St. Mochta of Louth is said to have been the last of the disciples of St. Patrick; so that he must have been of a very advanced age at the time of his death in the year 534. He had been raised to the Episcopate in Rome; and some time after his return to Ireland he established a great monastic school at Louth; but no trace remains of the Rule of life framed by him for his followers. Those under his guidance—including many of the highest culture, among whom were, at least, a hundred Bishops and three hundred priests—derived great profit from his teaching; more especially as he was profoundly learned in the Holy Scriptures: to the study of which he would have his disciples devote themselves unremittingly. St. Patrick showed his love for the holy Mochta by confiding to him the care of the See of Armagh. And even the gift of miracles during his life, such as the raising of the dead, also testified to Mochta's sanctity. After his death the school of Louth continued to flourish until the coming of the Danes; while his influence, like that of our other monastic Founders, perseveres in its hidden effects in the Irish Church to the present day.

The name of St. Finnian of Clonard is next met with in our ancient annals. He is known as "the Guide of the Saints of Ireland," so marvellous was his success in directing his disciples in the way of holiness. He was born in Leinster towards the end of the fifth century; and dedicated himself to the service of God from his earliest years. Having passed some time in Wales at the monastery of St. David, he came to found his own school of virtue at Clonard in the county Meath. Three

[9] Alemand, p. 18.

thousand monks lived under his jurisdiction there, meeting at stated times to hear their holy Master expound the mystical meaning of the Inspired Word. In doing so he was wont to stand on a little eminence apart, so that his voice might reach each one in that vast audience, over which a solemn silence prevailed, his numerous disciples rivalling each other in earnestness of attention, and that refinement of Christian politeness resulting from the practice of the Science of the Saints. Then retiring, each to his humble cell, those fervent monks pondered in solitude over the words of wisdom which they had just heard—so helpful to them in keeping their pure souls in still closer union with God. So, too, were they enabled to practise all the more easily those harsh austerities prescribed by their holy Master to insure contempt for the pleasures and comforts of this mortal life.

St. Finnian's own spirit of self-denial was such that it would not allow him to accept a gold ring which the great St. Brigid had offered to him, as a token of her reverence for his charity and zeal: she was yet more highly edified by this evidence of his love of Evangelical poverty. Like St. John of the Cross in after ages, he constantly wore a spiked iron cincture until it became quite embedded in his flesh; while his fasts and vigils inspired with awe those whose own penances are described as terrifying. But, from the beginning, it was the way with our Irish monks of old; having thoroughly grasped the reality of the spiritual life, they would suffer nothing to deter them in the more perfect correspondence with the grace of their vocation; hence those rigorous mortifications, from which they derived strength of soul, no less than from prayer. St. Finnian died about the year 552, having lived to behold his beloved Clonard a seminary of great Irish Saints. Nor was it the young and inexperienced merely who came to him during life

for instruction; eminent Bishops and Abbots were among the humblest of his disciples. One reason assigned for this fact was the difficulty of obtaining books at that remote epoch; precious manuscript copies of the Holy Scriptures, and of the writings of the earlier Fathers of the Church were alone procurable; so that in order to profit by the wisdom and learning of St. Finnian of Clonard, and of the other great Irish Masters of the spiritual life, it was necessary to come to their monasteries and dwell among the crowd of their earnest followers.

St. Columbanus, one of the glories of Bangor, takes rank among our holy Founders, because of his zeal in introducing the spirit of Irish Monasticism on the continent of Europe.[10] From the time of his arrival in France, A.D. 575, when he was little over thirty years of age, until his death in A.D. 615, the career of this Saint abounds in events of entrancing interest. Of firm determination of character, he was noted for that winsome gentleness which is said to have made the holy Benignus St. Patrick's favourite disciple; and was, indeed, a trait in all our Irish Saints easily traceable to their fervent exercise of the monastic life. On setting out from Bangor, with St. Comgall's blessing, it was the first intention of St. Columbanus merely to perform a pilgrimage "for Christ's sake": after which he would retire, with some other monks, to a far distant retreat, wherein they might persevere to the end in the practice of austerities and prayer. Here we may not dwell on the circumstances that brought about the founding of the famed abbeys of Luxeuil and Bobbio; and to the drawing up of a Rule to which thousands and thousands of pious followers would gladly submit in order to

[10] See "The Mission of St. Benedict" (*Historical Sketches*, vol. ii.) for Cardinal Newman's charming description of contemporary Monasticism on the Continent.

sanctify themselves according to those traditions of virtue established by St. Columbanus both in Italy and France. The Count de Montalembert has succeeded in popularizing the authentic Life of the Saint, written by the monk Jonas of Bobbio, blending with his narrative some thrilling incidents from the history of his own beloved country.[11] And when thus recounting what the great Irish missionary and his disciples have done for the Church in France, this modern champion of the monks pays many a graceful tribute to our Western Thebaid, the holiness of which became known among the nations abroad by St. Columbanus' spirit of zeal.

The glory of the school which the young St. Ciaran founded at Clonmacnoise, on the Shannon, had been predicted by St. Finnian of Clonard, his Master in the spiritual life. St. Ciaran was born at Fuerty in the county Roscommon, and died in the thirty-third year of his age, A.D. 544. After leaving Clonard, the holy youth paid a visit to Saint Enda of Aran, who, likewise, foretold his future greatness. The site chosen by St. Ciaran for his own monastery was a wild and dreary place in "the very centre of Ireland"—all the more desirable, on this account, to himself and his companions, already conscious that countless souls should thence ascend to God. They toiled for four months in constructing the church and cells, manual labour of this kind entering into the routine of their daily lives. This was the beginning of perhaps the most famed of all our ancient monastic schools; its renown drew thither such crowds of students, even from distant lands, that a flourishing city sprang up around the sacred enclosure in the course of time. St. Ciaran himself did not witness the glory of Clonmacnoise, dying a few months after the foundation of that monastery; but

[11] "The Monks of the West," vol. ii., p. 387.

God had previously revealed to him the fruit of his own earnest prayers for the welfare of the Irish Church. He breathed his last in the arms of one whom he had dearly loved while yet at Clonard—St. Kevin of Glendalough.[12]

The Rule of St. Brendan of Clonfert, county Galway, is said to have been given to him by an angel; for which reason it was always held in reverent esteem. This Saint was already far advanced in age when he founded the monastery at Clonfert (A.D. 556), still he lived to govern it himself for at least twenty years; insuring its fame as a home of sanctity and learning. He had several thousand monks under his immediate jurisdiction at this time; still we are told that he took a personal interest in the monastic institutions which he had established elsewhere; visiting them frequently in order to satisfy himself that all his spiritual children were intent upon the grand object of their holy vocation. He is known as "The Voyager"; because of his having passed seven years of his life on sea seeking lands beyond the Atlantic Ocean, some reliable authors maintaining that he actually succeeded in reaching the continent of America. At all events, the fame of that voyage attracted many more disciples to the Saint, who took care to impress upon them that this life, at its best, is but a lengthy pilgrimage; Heaven, the true harbour of rest.[13]

St. Brendan was born, A.D. 484, near Tralee, in the county Kerry; the holy Bishop Erc foretelling his future renown even before the child's birth. From his very infancy he was under the care of St. Ita of the Desii: as famed for her wisdom and firmness of purpose as for her sanctity; yet of a most winning disposition

[12] An account of the marvellous career of this great Saint is given among the "Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore" (Whitley Stokes, Oxford, 1890), p. 262.

[13] "Ware's Bishops" (Harris: Dublin, 1739), p. 637.

—a trait that began to manifest itself in the young Brendan, also, at a very early age. Acting on the advice of this holy virgin, St. Brendan resolved to visit the schools of the "Fathers of Erin," promising, however, to return to his first master, St. Erc, for ordination. Having an intense love for the study of the Sacred Scriptures, he stayed some time with St. Jarlath of Tuam, who possessed a most profound knowledge of the Inspired Text. That great Saint informed his zealous disciple that he himself was destined to become a monastic Founder; adding that the School of Clonfert should be the crown, as it were, of Brendan's career. And when this prophecy was duly fulfilled, not alone did the inmates of the monasteries established by St. Brendan gain fame for virtue, and knowledge of the Sacred Sciences; but therein, moreover, much was done to preserve everything good and beautiful in the profane literature of antiquity. So that to St. Brendan and his monks, as well as to St Ciaran and the scholars of Clonmacnoise, we are indebted for the most authentic records concerning Ireland during the pre-Christian epoch: for the preservation of many thrilling poems of our ancient Bards; of those Laws of the wise and learned Brehons; and of other works which illustrate the progress of civilization in Ireland even in Pagan times. St. Brendan had a holy sister named Briga, to whom he was deeply attached; and whose sanctity, like his own, was fostered by the prudent guidance of their kinswoman, St. Ita. This sister had, from her childhood, devoted herself to the service of God. She dwelt, together with a great number of pious virgins who had placed themselves under her direction, in a nunnery established for her by St. Brendan at Annaghdown, on Lough Corrib—one of the most picturesque of our Irish lakes. While paying her a visit of charity there, St. Brendan died in the ninety-fourth year of his age.

Before concluding this very brief review of the lives of the glorious Saints, who are regarded as the monastic Legislators of the ancient Irish Church, we must make passing mention, at least, of the grand career of one who taught and led countless thousands of the fervent women of Ireland to emulate the heroic virtues practised by the austerest solitaries of our Western Thebaid: who has been invoked by her devout clients, in after ages, under the beautiful title of "the Mary of the Gael." We have already seen in what reverence St. Brigid's holiness was held by such of our saintly Founders as had the happiness of rejoicing in her friendship during life. The most learned Bishops eagerly sought counsel from her: "than whom there was not in the whole world one more bashful and modest. Compared to the other holy virgins of Ireland, she was as the dove among the birds; the vine amid trees; and as the sun contrasted with the stars." There is a controversy concerning the parentage of the saint: some writers hold that she was of noble birth; others say that she was the daughter of a slave, named Brocessa, whom her father—the chieftain Dubhtach—had sold at the instance of his wife before the predestined child was born. Be this as it may, St. Brigid's birth took place near Dundalk in the year 450; and she died about A.D. 525, in the nunnery which she had established at Kildare, where she had also founded a monastic school no less renowned in the history of Ireland. This being the centre of her zeal, St. Brigid began her apostolate among the daughters of Erin; readily accepting the invitations of the holy Bishops throughout the country, who were wont to beseech her to come to edify their people by the mortified life which she led. And soon the example of her virtues and her words of holy prudence became an influence in the Irish Church that has not ceased to the present day; the fervour of St. Brigid ever revealing to her

spiritual children the loveliness of that purity of heart—her special heritage to the women of Ireland which is said to have been typified in the mystical light of Kildare.[14]

[14] "Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum," p. 127.

## CHAPTER III.

### SOME OF OUR MORE ANCIENT SANCTUARIES.

It would be quite impossible to furnish anything like an exhaustive list of the monastic institutions founded by our Irish Saints: the names of but comparatively few of these establishments have come down to us; and rarely do we find the origin assigned to each ancient sanctuary free of controversy among the learned. However, a rapid review of the little that is known concerning those venerated shrines will enhance the value of our narrative, while we insist on Ireland's claim to be recognised as a "Second Thebaid." If we have to deplore the want of more precise information on such important points as the holy Founder's identity and the very century in which he may have flourished, still it is certain that in each of these ancient monasteries countless fervent religious sanctified themselves according to that rigid spirit of asceticism adopted from the beginning in the Irish Church.

Commencing with the Province of Leinster, our annalists first mention the abbey of Finglass,[1] in the county Dublin; attributing its foundation to St. Patrick himself; and associating with it the names of several other Irish Saints, such as Saints Florentius, Noe, and Foelchu; and some say that St. Kenny was abbot here, but most writers are silent on the subject when alluding to the renowned Founder of the abbey of Aghaboe.[2] In the course of the sixth century,

[1] "Monasticon Hibernicum" (Archdall: London, A.D. 1786), p. 215.
[2] Lanigan, vol. ii., p. 200.

St. Nessan is said to have established an abbey on the island known as IRELAND'S EYE [3] wherein he himself passed the remaining years of his holy life; in the same century St. Columba founded an abbey at SWORDS [4] which had still a large community at the date of the battle of Clontarf (A.D. 1014). Indeed, we are told that upon some of the monks of this abbey devolved the pious duty of removing the body of Brian Boroimhe from the fatal field after his glorious death in the hour of victory. The abbey of CLONDALKIN, [5] dating from the seventh century, had St. Mochua for its founder; and soon became famed for the holiness of its inmates: St. Ferfugillus died there in the year 784. St. Macculine, whose death occurred about the year 496, established an abbey at LUSK, [6] also in the county Dublin; in this county, likewise, was the abbey of TALLAGHT, [7] which owed its origin to St. Maelruan, who lived some time in the eighth century. Not far from Tallaght was the abbey of SAGGARD, [8] founded towards the middle of the seventh century by St. Mosacres.

St. Naithfraich, who flourished at the beginning of the sixth century, was first abbot of the ancient monastery of KILDARE. [9] In the county of that name, there was an abbey at CLANE, [10] supposed to have been founded by St. Ailbe in the fifth century; and the abbey of KILLOSSY, [11] named after the holy abbot and Bishop Auxilius, the nephew of St. Patrick. The abbey of GLASSNOIDEN [12] was also in the county Kildare; its founder being St. Mobhius, who studied under St.

[3] Alemand, p. 8 (Text). [4] Archdall, 255. "Adamnan's Life of St. Columba" (Dr. Reeves: Dublin, 1857), p. 279.

[5] Ibidem, p. 131. [6] Ibidem, p. 257. [7] Walsh, p. 437.

[8] Walsh, p. 435. [9] Ibid., p. 483. Lanigan, vol. ii., p. 132.

[10] Archdall, p. 312.

[11] Ibid., p. 332; Walsh, p. 488. There were other ancient monastic institutions in the County Dublin at Glassmore, Kilnais, Killshaglin, Mountown. Palmerstown and St. Dulough's.—*Walsh*, pp. 430-436.

[12] Ibidem, p. 481

Finnian at Clonard, and is thought to have been related to the great St. Brigid. His death occurred in the year 545.

In the county Wicklow, St Kevin established a great abbey at GLENDALOUGH[13] in the sixth century, dedicating it to Saints Peter and Paul. There, too, we find a monastic school causing a crowded city to appear in that wilderness known as the Valley of the Lakes. In after ages the church attached to the abbey of St. Kevin became invested with the privileges of a Cathedral (A.D. 1182), being served by a community of Canons Regular, who, by this time, had acquired a wide popularity in Ireland. Another of the churches of Glendalough —that of St. Saviour—was in charge of a community of the same Order, dwelling in a priory attached to the sacred edifice. But in earlier times, when Glendalough was at the height of its fame for sanctity, so numerous were the monks assembled there, that their fervent chanting of the Divine praises sounded loud above the storm raging over the angry waters of those lakes. The abbey of DRUIMCHAIN,[14] in the same county, was one of those monastic institutions attributed to the zeal of St. Abbhan.

Of the more ancient abbeys in the county Wexford, that of ACHADABHLA,[15] dating from the fifth century, is laid to the credit of St. Finnian; while that of BEG ERIN[16] —an island to the north of Wexford harbour—is traced to the fervour of a disciple and constant companion of St. Patrick: St. Ibar, whose renown gained him many fervent followers. St. Abbhan is credited with the foundation of several abbeys during the sixth century, all in the county Wexford: CAMROSS-FIONNAGH;[17]

[13] Lanigan, vol. ii., p. 44 *sq.*

[14] Alemand, p. 13. But evidently intended for Dromchaoinchellaigh, Co. Wexford—Walsh, p. 703. In the County Kildare there were also the ancient monasteries of Cloonagh, Diseart-Fulertach, Grange Nolven, and Maynooth.—Walsh, pp. 480-488.

[15] Walsh, p. 701. [16] Ibid., p. 702. [17] Ibid., p. 702.

MAGHERA-NUIDHE [18]; and DESERT-CHEANDUBHAIN.[19] The abbey of ROS-MIC-TRIAN, [20] on the river Barrow, was founded about the same epoch by St. Evin, who had come thither from Munster. St. Fintan-Munna was the founder of the abbey of TEAGH MUNNA—or Taghmon [21] early in the following century. His renown as a spiritual director had been predicted by St. Columba; and he had soon a community of a hundred and fifty-two monks under his guidance at Taghmon. The origin of the abbey of CLONMORE [22] is traced to St. Maidoc of Ferns, who appointed St. Dichulla its first abbot; St. Ternoc is also said to have presided there. We are told that the Danes made repeated raids on Clonmore during the ninth century, putting, on each occasion, many of its holy inmates to the sword. St. Colman of the Hy-Fiachra race, and famed for his extraordinary holiness, was founder of the abbey of SEANBOTHA,[23] some time during the sixth century; towards the end of the same century another abbey was established in the county Wexford at INVERDAOILE [24] by St. Dagan, brother of St. Libba of Glendalough and of St. Menoc, the disciple of St. Pulcherius of Leathmore. The abbey of FERNS,[25] which suffered greatly from the invasion of the Danes, was the fruit of the zeal of St. Maidoc, who died in the year 632.

St. Maidoc was also the founder of the abbey of FIDDOWN [26] in the county Kilkenny. The abbey of KIMANAGH [27] was in the same county; and is said to

[18] Ibid., p. 708. [19] Ibid., p. 703. [20] Ibid., p. 708.
[21] Ibid., p. 710. [22] Lanigan, II., 337.

[23] Lanigan, III., p. 2. Ballykine, Donard, Inisboyne, Killgorman, Killaird, Killnaningean, Shruthair, and Teachnaromhan are said to have been, likewise, the sites of ancient sanctuaries in the county Wicklow.—Walsh, pp. 714-790.

[24] Ibidem, II., p. 365. Mention is made of the following ancient sanctuaries in the county Kilkenny: Dermagh, Killaghy, Killamery, Killphian, Killmanagh, and Tibrach-Fachna.—Walsh, pp. 492-501: and of Achad-Finglass, and Killfort-kern in the county Carlow.—Walsh, pp 366-368.

[25] Ibid., II., p. 337; III., p. 271. [26] Archdall, p. 351. [27] Ibid., p. 375.

have owed its origin to St. Natalis, the son of King Aengus of Cashel, slain about the year 490.

In the year 616, St. Gobhan founded an abbey at OLD LEIGHLIN,[28] county Carlow, placing it under the care of St. Laserian some sixteen years later on, when there appear to have been as many as fifteen hundred monks there. Then there was the abbey of the holy Moling at a place called SAINT MULLINS[29] on the river Barrow: this Saint became Bishop of Ferns eventually; and died at the close of the seventh century (A.D. 697).

In the King's County, St. Kieran, Bishop of Ossory, founded an abbey at a place afterwards known as SHYRE, or SEIR-KIERAN.[30] This great Saint's death occurred in the year 550; the pious traditions of his virtues being practically perpetuated at Seir-Kieran, century after century, although the monks there were very frequently harassed by the Danes. The elder St. Brendan was founder of the abbey of BIRR.[31] This was the Saint who so generously defended St. Columba when censured by the Synod of Geashill, protesting that he dared not dishonour by even the suspicion of his reproach one whom he knew to be predestined "to guide the nations." The monastic school of Birr became of world-wide renown. When St. Kilian was abbot there, many of the Irish students were obliged to leave for other monasteries; charitably resigning their own places in favour of the foreigners who had come to Birr to place themselves under that great Master's spiritual guidance. So fervent was St. Kilian's own charity, that he used to send his monks to seek out those in distress all over the country, in order to bring relief to the afflicted more speedily. The abbey

[28] Ibid., p. 36. [29] Walsh, p. 368. [30] Ibid., p. 516.

[31] Lanigan, II., p. 39. The ancient abbeys of Killbrayey, Ardne-Coeman, Ardlathran, Carnsore, Darinis, Dromchaoinchellaigh, Inisbeg, Inisfael and Maghinembna were also in the county Wexford.—Walsh, pp. 701-708.

of LYNALLY,[32] where St. Tedgalius died in the year 709, was also in the King's County, founded by St. Colman-Elo during the sixth century. And St. Kieran, the younger, established the abbey and school of CLONMACNOISE.[33] St. Alitha died there, A.D. 594, having had the privilege of entertaining St. Columba on his visit to that far-famed seminary of wisdom and sanctity. At CLONFERT-MULLOE [34] was the abbey founded by St. Mulla in the sixth century: one of its abbots being that St. Lactean, to whom St. Laidgen attributed his own progress in the way of monastic perfection. About the same period, St. Barrindeus—who, like St. Brendan, had travelled into "the distant Western lands"—was founder of the abbey of DRUIMCUILLIN. [35] St. Canoc's abbey of GALLEN [36] was, from the sixth century, a favourite resort for scholars from Wales; for they claimed the holy Founder as a countryman of their own, although he was admittedly of Irish descent. Like many others of our more ancient sanctuaries, Gallen was handed over to the Canons Regular at the great revival of Monasticism in Ireland by St. Malachy O'Moore. Somewhere near Gallen,[37] we are told, the devoted Odran met his death while heroically personating St. Patrick, upon whose life one of the Pagan chiefs had a murderous design.

The abbey of Holy Cross at KILLEIGH,[38] King's County, dated from the sixth century, having St. Sinchell as its Founder: that of DURROW [39] was, as we have seen, established by St. Columba (A.D. 546) where he is said to have been succeeded by St. Cormac. There, too, the Canons Regular were introduced in the course of time; the community being most harshly treated by the

[32] Archdall, p. 402. [33] Lanigan, II., p. 52, 243.
[34] Ibid., II., p. 206. De Burgo ("Appendix Monastica," A.D. 1762), p 728, *sq.*
[35] Walsh, p. 508. [36] Ibid., p. 510.
[37] Lanigan, II., p. 253. [38] Alemand, p. 29.
[39] Lanigan, I., 243; Walsh, p. 508.

Anglo-Norman adventurers in the year 1175. But just as the Danes, who had raided that holy place nearly a century before (A.D. 1059), met with a signal defeat because of their disrespect for the memory of St. Columba; so did their equally ruthless successors experience great disaster after having so wantonly profaned this favoured sanctuary. It was there, too, Hugh de Lacy—"the Pride of the Invaders, but the destroyer and profaner of the churches and monasteries of Ireland"—met his tragic fate. While watching the workmen engaged in the erection of his new castle, on the site of the ancient abbey of Durrow, he was slain by a young man, who immediately escaped into the territory of the O'Sionagh, then bearing the title of "Noble," afterwards forfeited by a degenerate descendant in accepting a peerage from Queen Elizabeth. Finally, there was the great abbey of LEATHMORE [40] in the King's County, founded in the sixth century by St. Pulcherius—nephew of St. Ita, and disciple of St. Comgall; one of his successors as abbot there was St. Cuangus, who died some time in the year 747.

St. Cannice, or Kenny, founded the abbey of AGHABOE [41] in the Queen's County, some time in the latter half of the sixth century, and died there in the year 600; the death of another abbot of Aghaboe is recorded as having occurred, A.D. 784. In the same county St. Fintan established the abbey of CLONENAGH [42]; and had for his immediate successor a Saint bearing his own name, who died in 625. So rigid were the austerities practised by the monks of Cloneagh that even St. Cannice had to remonstrate with the holy Founder, who thereupon permitted his subjects the use of milk, which, however, he still continued to deny to himself. St. Columba had the highest esteem for St. Fintan, and frequently advised those who came to himself at Iona to place themselves

[40] Walsh, p. 513. [41] Lanigan, II., p. 200. [42] Archdall, p. 59.

under the direction of the saintly abbot of Cloneagh : a keen mortification to the humble St. Fintan, who implored his pious clients not to mention the fact to others during his own life-time, at least. The abbey of ANNATRIM [43] owed its origin to St. Colman, a contemporary of St. Fintan ; that of ACHADUR [44] is attributed to St. Lachtean ; and the abbey of ACHAD-ARDGLASS [45] to the holy Founder of Cloneagh. During the sixth century St. Breccan established the abbey of CLUAINE-MURCHAIR [46] ; and St. Brogan that of ROSTURIC,[47] where, probably, he composed his famous poem in praise of the virtues of St. Brigid at St. Ultan's earnest request. St. Diermit was first abbot of the abbey of GLEANUSSEN, [48] which, also, dated from the sixth century ; Saints Comgan and Murgenius were among his successors there. Some ascribe the origin of the abbey of MUNDREHID [49] to St. Lasren of Durrow ; others maintain that its founder was St. Manchen, the Wise, who died about the year 652. The annalists merely mention the abbey of AGHMACART [50] which was likewise in the Queen's County.

Among the ancient sanctuaries in the county Meath, first place is given to the abbey of TRIM, [51] which was founded early in the sixth century by St. Loman, a reputed nephew of St. Patrick. St. Cormac, of the royal race of the Nials, closed his holy career there in the year 741. He had a brother named Ruman, whom historians style the " Virgil of Ireland." St. Baitellach was another brother, who succeeded Cormac as abbot of Trim, and

[43] Ibid., p. 591.

[44] "Appendix Monastica," p. 729. [45] "Appendix Monastica," p. 729.

[46] Walsh, p. 618. In the King's County, also, were the ancient monasteries of Killcolgan, Killagally, Killhuacllech, Killiedain, Knity, Lemanchan, Munga, Rathbeg and Rathlibthen.—Walsh, pp, 511-515.

[47] Ibid., p. 620. [48] Ibid., p. 619.

[49] Ibid., p. 620. [50] Ibid., p. 616.

[51] Ibid., p. 609; Archdall, p. 575. Among other ancient abbeys in the Queen's County were those of Cluainchaoin, Desertenos, Desert-Odran, Killdelge, Killebbane, Killermogh, Killfoelan, Leamchuil, Sletty, Teachscutin, Tempulnacaillagh and Timahoe.— Walsh, pp. 618-621.

survived him just ten years, dying A.D. 751. This abbey was richly endowed by the De Lacys for a community of Canons Regular towards the close of the thirteenth century; and in the year 1444 many striking miracles were wrought before a statue of the Blessed Virgin, the fame of which attracted great crowds to Trim. In the following century, A.D. 1538, this statue was publicly burned, as the Four Masters record, by "those who favoured that new heresy which had sprung up in England, having its origin in pride, vain-glory, avarice and lust." There are writers who quote the fact of the existence of a Greek church at Trim in former times as an argument of Ireland's renown for holiness and learning.

St. Kieran founded the abbey of DULEEK [52] in the county Meath. This Saint is said to have been baptized by our National Apostle, who, in after years, presented him with a copy of the Four Gospels. Several times plundered by the Danes, Duleek was eventually restored by Hugh de Lacy for a community of the Canons Regular from the priory of Lanthony, near Gloucester. The abbey of DONOGH-PATRICK [53] is said to bear the name of its holy Founder; and was one of those monastic institutions that suffered grievously from the incursions of the Danes. The famous school of SLANE [54] is also traced to St. Patrick; one of its most learned professors being that Probus who wrote what is considered the best authenticated "Life" of our Saint; and who was killed by the Danes in the year 948. Other invaders made a descent on this abbey in 1190, led on by Strongbow and the perfidious MacMurrough, neither of whom showed any reverence for the sanctuary over which St. Erc, also, had once presided; and which had sheltered Dagobert, king of Austrasia, sent thither in

[52] Lanigan, I. p. 341. [53] Archdall, p. 529.
[54] Lanigan, p. 223; Walsh, p. 607.

his youth to acquire wisdom and virtue under the guidance of the holy monks of Slane. We have already seen how the great abbey of CLONARD [55] had St. Finnian for its Founder: St. Moel-Mochta being one of its renowned masters in the year 940. Clonard was profaned both by the Danes, and by the Anglo-Norman invaders. The abbey of DYSART—Disert-Mochlmoc [56]—was founded by St. Colman in the course of the sixth century; that of KILLABBHAN,[57] to the north of the county Meath, by St. Abbhan; and, probably, the abbey of CLOONFAD [58] owed its origin to St. Libern, who, like St. Senach, was certainly abbot there; but it is also attributed to St. Etchen, said to have ordained St. Columba priest, whose death occurred about the year 577.

St. Aidus, Bishop of Kildare some time in the sixth century, established the abbey of RATHUG [59] in the county Westmeath; in the same county the abbey of RATHENEN [60] is attributed to St. Carthag. The great abbey of FORE [61] had St. Fechin for its Founder, A.D. 630. Several thousand fervent monks dwelt there at the same time; while Saints Brendan, Moeldubh, Conadar, Suarlech, and Aedgen were among St. Fechin's successors. In the thirteenth century (A.D. 1209) Walter de Lacey introduced a community of Benedictine monks into this abbey, making it subject to that of St. Taurin's, Evreux, in Normandy. St. Fechin also established a monastic institution at TIPPERT [62] which he made dependent, however, on the abbey of Fore. Some writers identify the abbey of CLUAN-DRACKRAN [63]—traced to St. Mochua-MacNeil in the seventh century—with that of CLOONE,[64] county Longford, concerning which hardly anything is known. Moreover, it is inferred from the name TOBER-

[55] Walsh, p. 593.
[56] Walsh, p. 692.
[57] Ibid., p. 602.
[58] Ibid., p. 690.
[59] Archdall, p. 725.
[60] Alemand, p. 43.
[61] Lanigan, II., p. 190 *sq.*; Walsh, p. 692.
[62] Archdall, p. 728.
[63] Ibidem, p. 708.
[64] Walsh, p. 535.

CORMAC[65] that a St. Cormac was founder of the abbey which existed in that place in the county Westmeath.

St. Ultan, in his "Life of St. Brigid," calls the abbey of ARDAGH,[66] county Longford, "The great Monastery." It was founded by St. Mel, said to have been related to St. Patrick, and Bishop of Ardagh in the fifth century; he was succeeded by his brother, St. Melchuo. The abbey of INISBOFIN[67] was established by St. Roc—a Saint venerated all over Ireland, because of the miracles wrought through his intercession during the sixth century. St. Columba is claimed as the founder of the abbey of INISMORE,[68] where Saints Senan and Boedhan presided as abbots. An abbey was founded at INISCLOTHRAN,[69] another island of Loughree, by St. Diermit, probably about the year 540: a few years later on, St. Kieran established the abbey of "All Saints" on INISAINGAN,[70] whence he proceeded to found his monastic school of Clonmacnoise.[71] A holy Bishop called Modun was founder of the abbey of MOYDOE,[71] and died there in the year 561.

The interesting remains of the abbey of MONASTERBOICE,[72] in the county Louth, insure it special attention; although so little is known of its former history. St.

[65] Archdall, p. 728. The following is a list of other ancient monastic institutions in the county Meath: Ardbreccan, Ardcath, Ardmulchan, Ardsailech, Ardslane, Caillefolachda, Calleaghtown, Clonmainan, Cloonmorfernarda, Desertola, Doiremacaidmecan, Domnachmor, Domnachsarige, Donaghtortain, Dromcorcothii, Drumfinchoil, Drommacubla, Dunshauglin, Feartacherbain, Indennen, Killailbe, Killeen, Killdumagloin, Killschire, Loughskillen, Nuadchonbhail, Pierstown, Rathossan, Roseach, Teaghernan, Teaghsinche, Telltown, Trevet and Tullen.—Walsh, pp. 587-612. While in Westmeath there were the ancient sanctuaries of Clonrane, Cluainmnhaoscna, Drumreilgeach, Comraire, Coniry, Drumfeartain, Drumcree, Drumrany, Farrenenamannagh, Farren-Macheigkese, Hare Island, Innisvachtuir, Kennard, Killare, Killbixy, Killuken, Killtome, Leckin, Lyn, Rathenen and Teagh-baithen.—Walsh, pp. 689-701.

[66] Lanigan, I., p. 402. [67] Archdall, p. 440. [68] Alemand, p. 49.

[70] Ibidem, p. 48. [69] Ibid., p. 50.

[71] Ibid., p. 49. In the county Longford there were ancient monasteries at Abbeyshruel, Clonebrone, Fairgney, Killglais, and at Killinmore.—Walsh, pp. 535-538.

[72] Lanigan, vol. i., p. 461.

Boetius, who died in 522, is said to have been its founder; an abbot of this monastery was drowned in the Boyne in the year 762; and in 958 the sanctuary was plundered by the Danes. St. Mocteus, "the last of the disciples of St. Patrick," founded the abbey of LOUTH.[73] His death occurred on the 19th of August, 535. St. Dichull was abbot there in the year 700. Louth was repeatedly raided by the Danes; and in 1148 was destroyed by fire. The abbey of DRUMSHALLON,[73] county Louth, was one of those said to have been established by St. Patrick; St. Ronan was its abbot in 664; and there, in the year 879, died St. Aidus VI., king of Ireland.

The monastic school of ARMAGH,[74] founded by St. Patrick about the year 457, is the first mentioned by the annalists of Ulster. For ages it continued to be the most renowned of all similar establishments throughout the world; but interesting as the history of this great abbey undoubtedly is, here we may only allude to the fact of thousands upon thousands of the spiritual children of St. Patrick having sanctified themselves there from the time of its dedication to Saints Peter and Paul, until its suppression in the year 1539. Among the abbots of Armagh were Saint Duach (A.D. 513), another Saint of the same name (A.D. 535); St. Fechin (A.D. 578); St. Echod (A.D. 598); St. Senach (A.D. 610); St. Lasre (A.D. 623); and the holy Bishop Thomian (A.D. 661), who appealed to Rome for a final decision on the famous Pascal question. St. Maelbrigid died at Armagh in the year 926; and in the abbey-church were interred the remains of king Brian Boroimhe, and

[73] Lanigan, I. p. 308; Ibidem, p. 238; Walsh, p. 545.

[74] Lanigan, I., p. 312, *sq.*; Walsh, p. 360, *sq.*; "Stuart's Historical Memoirs of the city of Armagh" (Rev. A. Coleman, O.P.: Dublin, 1900), pp. 16 *sq.*, 455. In the county Louth were the ancient abbeys of Ardpatrick, Cluainbroain, Dromcar, Dromfion, Innismochda, Innisken-Deghadh, Killclogher, and Killunche.—Walsh, pp. 542-548.

B· ÉRE.M. S. BERNARDI C· ÉRE.M. S. ELIÆ D· ÉRE.M. S. IACOB·
E· ÉRE.M. S. IOAN. BAPTÆ F· ÉRE.M. S. ELIÆ G· ÉRE.M. S. MICHAELIS H· ÉRE.M. S. IOAN. BAPTÆ
L· ÉRE.M. S. M. TERESIÆ M· ÉRE.M. S. STEPHANI M·
O· CATHARINÆ P· PORTA CONVENTUS Q·
X
Z·

A "DESERT" OF THE ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES. (p. 21.)

of Malachy, Monarch of all Ireland. There was, also, attached to the cathedral of Armagh a presbytery for priests, who lived in community, obeying a superior chosen from among themselves. These priests were called "Culdees," a title derived from an Irish word signifying "servants of God." Several other communities of the same kind existed in the country, and comprised not alone members of the clergy, but pious laymen also anxious to serve God in a state of celibacy according to this method of life, said to have been inaugurated some time during the ninth century. In the county Armagh there was an abbey at CLONFEAKLE,[75] founded by St. Lugaid, who died there at an advanced age in the year 580.

The abbey of SAUL,[76] county Down, had also the glory of being founded by St. Patrick, who appointed his disciple St. Modunn to preside there as abbot. About the year 540 the abbey of MOVILLE,[77] in the same county, was established by St. Finnian, who had been the disciple of St. Colman of Dromore, but was probably ordained in Rome. His death occurred in the year 576, when many miracles were wrought at his tomb. St. Columba studied at Moville in his youth; and Saints Senell (A.D. 603); Sillan (A.D. 619); and Cronan (A.D. 650) were abbots there. The abbey of NEDDRUM,[78] the largest of the Copland Islands, dated from the fifth century, having St. Caillin for its holy founder. St. Colman, disciple of St. Ailbe of Emly, and the preceptor of St. Finnian of Clonard, established the abbey and episcopal See of DROMORE.[79] This Saint is supposed, moreover, to have founded the abbey of MAGHERALIN [80] on the river Lagan.

The abbey of RATHMUIGHE,[81] county Antrim, was, probably, due to the zeal of St. Olcan; although some

[75] Walsh, p. 364.
[76] Ibid., p. 418.
[77] Ibid., p. 416.
[78] Ibid., p. 417.
[79] Ibid., p. 416.
[80] Ibid., p. 416.
[81] Ibid., p. 359.

writers assert that St. Patrick himself was the founder.[82] We are also assured that our Apostle consecrated a Bishop named Brugacius at a place called RATHMUGE-AVNAICH[83]; this holy prelate was St. Olcan's immediate successor at Rathmuighe, where Saints Adamnan (A.D. 725) and Kieran ruled as abbots. The Danes often plundered this ancient sanctuary. Yet another abbey in the county Antrim is attributed to St. Patrick: that of RATHMOANE,[84] over which the Saint's disciple Erclacius presided. About two miles from the town of Antrim there is a place called MUCKAMORE,[85] where St. Colman-Elo dedicated an abbey to the Blessed Virgin. This great Saint died in the year 610. Segenius, an abbot of Hy, is said to have founded the abbey of RACHLIN,[86] an island off the coast of Antrim (A D. 591). Saints Flann (A.D. 734); Cumineus (A.D. 738); Feradach (A.D. 794); Tuathal (A.D. 848); and another St. Feradach (A.D. 973) governed this abbey. The Danes made their first descent on the Irish coast in the year 790, and pillaged the monastery of Rachlin. KILBOEDAN[87] abbey, so called after its founder St. Boedan, dated from the sixth century; in the seventh that of ACHADH-DUBTHUIGH[88] was established by St. Goar; while the holy anchoret Kellach, who died in the year 828, chose the place now known as KELLS[89] for the site of his monastery.

The most celebrated of St. Columba's abbeys was that of DERRY[90] established about the year 545 in the county of the same name. Quite a number of our Irish Saints

[82] Walsh, p. 356. Achadcaoil, Cluaindamh, Drumboe, Kilcholpa, Kilmbian, and Slieve-Donard are also mentioned as sites of ancient monasteries in the county Down.—Walsh, pp. 409-419.

[83] Walsh, p. 359. [84] Ibid., p. 359. [85] Ibid., p. 358.
[86] Ibid., p. 357. [87] Alemand, p. 94. [88] Walsh, p. 358.
[89] Ibid., p. 354 *sq.*

[90] Lanigan, Vol. I, p. 132.; Vol. II., p 104. The following are included among the ancient sanctuaries of the county Antrim: Achadcin, Antrim, Ardmasnasca, Ballycastle, Borthbolcain, Connor, Domnach-Braoin, Killeaspuicbolcain, Linella, Rathaige, Ratheaspuicinnic, Rathmurbuilg, Rathsithe, and Tulach.—Walsh, pp. 354-359.

were abbots here: the succession of superiors being uninterrupted until the time of Henry the Eighth. It was decided, A.D. 1158, that the abbots of Derry should have jurisdiction over all the monasteries of the "Order of St. Columba throughout Ireland." The abbey of COLERAINE,[91] county Derry, was founded by St. Corpreus, who flourished in the sixth century; he was succeeded by St. Conall, if, indeed, this Saint was not himself the first abbot of the monastery, as some writers say. It was St. Conall who entertained St. Columba at Coleraine after the famed assembly of Drumceat, in which Columba manifested such wisdom when called upon to arbitrate on matters of highest importance to the State. St. Comgall is supposed to have been the founder of CAMUS[92] abbey, which was also governed by St. Colman, who died in the year 619.

St. Patrick is claimed as the founder of an abbey which stood on an island of LOUGHDEARG,[93] county Donegal; but it is, likewise, attributed to a Saint of the fifth century named Dabeoch. The abbey of CNODAIN,[94] in the same county, is traced to St. Conandhil, who died towards the close of the sixth century; that of COMBHAIL[95] to St. Fiachra, afterwards abbot of Bangor. St. Ernene, a contemporary of St. Columba, was first abbot of DRUMTHUOMA[96]; St. Finian, who flourished about the same time, was founder of the abbey of MAGHBILE,[97] also in the county Donegal. FAHAN abbey,[98] established in the seventh century, owed its origin to St. Mura, who wrote a metrical "Life" of St. Columba (or Columbkille in Irish. He was succeeded by St. Kellach, the son of Saran. The abbey of BOTH-CONAIS—Innisowen[99]—

[91] Walsh—who, as a rule, quotes Archdall literally—p. 398.
[92] Ibid., p. 398. [93] Ibid., p. 407. [94] Ibid., p. 405.
[95] Ibid., p. 406. [96] Ibid., p. 406. [97] Ibid., p. 407.
[98] Ibid., p. 406.
[99] Ibid., p. 404. In the county Derry there were ancient monastic institutions at Arragell, Dizertoghill, Domnach-Tola, Dunboe, and Magilligan.—Walsh, pp. 398-401.

dated from the same century, having for its founder, St. Comgall, brother of St. Christicola.

A disciple of St. Patrick, known as St. Maccartan, died in the year 506; he was founder of the abbey and bishopric of CLOUGHER,[100] county Tyrone. St. Tigernach was his immediate successor; then followed Saints Sinell, Fedlimid, Ultan, and several other holy abbots, renowned in the Irish Church for virtue and learning.

In the county Fermanagh, St. Laserian established an abbey on DEVENISH ISLAND,[101] Lough Erne, which soon developed into a great monastic school. This Saint was a disciple of St. Finnian of Clonard, and died, probably, in the year 563 or 564. St. Natalis was the next abbot of Devenish, succeeded by St. Sillan, A.D. 658. A very ancient "Life" of St. Laserian is still extant, recording the many marvellous events of his holy career. The abbey of DOMNACH-MORE[102] was on another island of Lough Erne—Inismac-saint: it dated from the fifth century and was founded by St. Nennius; in the following century St. Sinell MacMoenach had an abbey at CLUAIN-INIS,[103] also an island of Lough Erne.

St. Moeldod is mentioned as the founder of the ancient abbey of MONAGHAN[104]: that of CLONES,[105] in the same county, was dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul by St. Tighernach, whose death occurred in the year 550.

There were abbeys at DRUMLAHAN,[106] and KILLA-CHAD[107] in the county Cavan. The former was under the

[100] "Ware's Bishops," Harris, p. 175. [101] Archdall, p. 259.
[102] Ibid., p. 261.
[103] Walsh, p. 441. The Abbey of Baillenagraair-tach was in the county Donegal, and also the abbeys of Clonleigh, Conwall, Garton, Iniscael, Inis-Samer, Kilbarron, Raphoe, Rathcunga, Sathreginden, Torre-Island, and Tulach-Dubglaisse.—Walsh, pp. 402-408. While in the county Tyrone there were the ancient monasteries of Airecal-Dachiaroc, Arooe, Ardstraw, Domnachmore, Killiny, and Trelick.—Walsh, pp. 676-678. The Abbeys of Iniseo and Inisrocha were in the county Fermanagh—Walsh, p. 442; the ancient sanctuary of Tehallen in the county Monaghan—Walsh, p. 614; and those of Ballylinch, Dromlommon and Mounter-Connaght in the county Cavan—Walsh, pp. 370-371.
[104] Archdall, p. 582. [105] Ibid., p. 385. [106] Ibid., p. 41. [107] Ibid., p 41.

patronage of the Blessed Virgin, and attributed to St. Maidoc; the latter is said to have been founded by St. Tighernach some time in the eighth century.

In the South of Ireland, the foundation of the abbey of BAILLENDESERT,[108] county Waterford, is also assigned to St. Maidoc of Ferns. St. Findhbar, the companion of St. Pulcherius, is mentioned as the founder of the abbey of INISDAMHLE,[109] an island in the river Suir; St. Brogan, as the first abbot of MOTHELL,[110] established some time in the sixth century; and we have seen how St. Carthag came to found his famous monastic school at LISMORE,[111] A.D. 630. The abbey of DUNGARVAN[112] dated from the seventh century, and is attributed to St. Garbhan; St. Cronan is claimed as the founder of CLASHMORE.[113] St. Declan having established the abbey of ARDMORE,[114] in the fifth century, was succeeded there by St. Ultan.

In "The Litany of St. Aengus" there is an invocation of the seventeen saintly Bishops, and seven hundred holy monks, whose remains rest in St. Finbarr's abbey at CORK—A.D. 606[115]—together with those of St. Nessan. The abbeys of CLUAIN,[116] CLUAIN-FINGLASS,[117] and KILLBEACAN[118]—all in the county Cork—are supposed to have been established by St. Abbhan, a nephew of St. Kevin of Glendalough. The great abbey of ROSS[119] also dated from the sixth century; in the seventh St. Molaggan founded his monastic school at TULACH-MHIN.[120]

It was for St. Nessan, whom he himself had ordained deacon, that St. Patrick founded the abbey and school of MUNGRET,[121] near Limerick. When foretelling the

[108-110] Walsh, pp. 680, 682, 686. [111] Harris, p. 548.
[112-120] Walsh, pp. 681, Ibid., 679, Ibid., 386, Ibid., 392, 394, 396.
[121] "Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum," p. 507 *sq.* Lanigan, II., p. 103 *sq.*; I., p. 291. Achaddagain, Cappah, Cathuir-MacConchaigh, Domnachmore, Killinboynan and Molana in the county Waterford are, likewise, associated with the names of several of our Irish Saints.—Walsh, pp. 679-686. In the county Cork the following are said to have been the sites of ancient monastic institutions: Ballymacdane, Brigoone, Cape Clare, Cloggagh, Clonmene, Cloyne, Inniscarra, Inispiet, Kilchuilin, Kilicrimther, Killinamarhban, Kinsale, Legan, Lueim, and Tuaim-Muisgraidhe.—Walsh, pp. 383-393.

future greatness of Nessan, St. Patrick insisted upon the necessity of obedience as the first of all virtues; for this holy youth's fervour in the practice of the same gave a guarantee that "he should one day spring up as a palm-tree." However, it was rather to St. Munchin, the Wise—St. Nessan's successor—that Mungret owed its fame as a monastic school. At one time there were as many as six churches within its sacred precincts: the home of at least fifteen hundred holy monks, besides the vast crowd of scholars studying there. Five hundred of these monks were preachers; five hundred were psalmists; and five hundred were solely devoted to a life of contemplative prayer. St. Senan, in the course of the fifth century, founded an abbey at INISCATHY,[122] an island of the river Shannon; St. Maidoc of Ferns had a monastery in the county Limerick at CLUAIN-CLAIDEACH [123]; and during the seventh century St. Mochelloc established an abbey in the same county at KILLMALLOCK.[124]

The abbey of EMLY,[125] county Tipperary, was founded by St. Ailbe, the master of so many holy men eminent in the Irish Church for virtue and learning during the fifth century. So zealous was St. Ailbe in the exercise of his apostolic labours that he has been called "a second St. Patrick;" but he is especially famous for his marvellous spirit of penance and prayer. St. Ruadan, a disciple of St. Finnian of Clonard, was founder of the abbey of LORRAH,[126] county Tipperary, where, probably, his death occurred about the year 584. The abbey of ARDFINIAN,[127] dating from the sixth century, owed its origin to St. Finnian; that of ROSCREA [128] to St. Cronan; and St. Abbhan founded one at CLUAINCONBRUIN [129];

[122-127] Walsh, pp. 375, 528, Ibid., 669, 656. [125] Harris, p. 490.

[128 129] Archdall, pp. 653, 77 (note), 672, 677, 661, Ibid. Allusion is made to other ancient abbeys in the county Limerick at Ardpatrick, Castletown-Maceneiry, Kildimma, Killfiachna, Killratha, and Killteidhil.—Walsh, pp. 523-531.

while the abbey of ENACH-MIDBRENIN [130] is attributed to St. Aidus, the son of Brec, whose death is recorded as having occurred in the year 589. St. Domnan is said to have dedicated an abbey to the Blessed Virgin at TOOME [131] during the seventh century; and one at INCHNAMEOBH [132] to Our Lady and St. Hilary. St. Pulcherius, also, placed his abbey at INISLAUNACHT,[133] on the Suir, under the protection of the Mother of God. Congan was abbot of Inislaunacht, A.D. 1140; it was at the request of this holy monk that St. Bernard undertook to write the "Life of St. Malachy"—receiving from him the MS. materials for this important work. The abbey of TIRDAGLASS [134] is attributed both to St. Colman-Stellain, and to St. Columba, son of Cremthan: the former died in 625; the latter in 552. Its abbot in the year 838 was St. Moyle Dichru, known as "the Sage."

Among the more ancient sanctuaries of the county Kerry was that of INISFALLEN [135]—a picturesque island in one of the lakes of Killarney—which is first brought under our notice. It was founded by St. Finian; a St. Dichul was abbot there, A.D. 640. The famed "Annals of Inisfallen" were written in this abbey about the year 1215, and continued to the year 1320; but the names of the pious chroniclers are unknown. A holy abbot, called Flann Moclellach, is mentioned as the founder of another abbey in the county Kerry: BALLINASKELIGS —or "Saint Michael's Mount" [136]—so named because dedicated to the Archangel.

St. Senan was also founder of the abbey of INISLUA [137]

[130-133] Archdall, pp. 653, 77 (note), 672, 677. Ibid., 661.

[134 135] Walsh, pp. 674, 473.

[136 137] Walsh, pp. 373, 374. Among the ancient abbeys of the county Tipperary may also be mentioned: Coning, Corbally, Domnachmore, Killmorearadthire, Latterachodran, and Moylagh.—Walsh, pp. 666-671. In the county Kerry there were, moreover, the ancient monasteries of Aghadoe, Aghamore, Monasterni-Oriel, Melchedor's Church, Ratto, and Skellig.—Walsh, pp. 472-476.

—an island in the Shannon—county Clare. It is said that he gave the Veil to some noble virgins there. King Brian Boroimhe was, in after years, one of the most generous benefactors of the abbey established by St. Camin at INISKELTRA [138] in the seventh century. This Saint was as renowned for his wisdom as for his great holiness; he wrote a very learned commentary on the Book of Psalms. He was succeeded by St. Stellan; and the celebrated Corcoran was, likewise, abbot of Iniskeltra. It was the holy Corcoran who sent St. Amnichad, one of his disciples, into exile to impress upon him all the more forcibly the great merit of the virtue of obedience. For that Saint had one day taken a drink of water without having first obtained his abbot's permission; and slight as the imperfection had been, neither he himself nor his great Master deemed banishment from their beloved Ireland too severe a penalty in atonement. St. Amnichad died at the abbey of Fulda in the year 1043.

In CONNAUGHT, there was St. Jarlath's famed abbey of TUAM,[139] county Galway. This Saint is also said to have founded the abbey of CLUAIN-FOIS,[140] in the same county: both monastic institutions gained a widespread renown in the course of the sixth century.

The year 480 is the date assigned for the establishment of St. Enda's great abbey on the island known as ARRAN OF THE SAINTS.[141] He had received the entire island as a gift from the pious king Aengus of Cashell through the intervention of St. Ailbe of Emly; and soon a community of a hundred and fifty monks were dwelling there, submitting to the austerest monastic discipline. Subsequently, quite a number of churches were built on this

[138] Walsh, p. 374. [139] [140] Harris, p. 602.

[141] Walsh, p. 445. Besides these two sanctuaries there were also in the county Clare the ancient abbeys of Ceanindis, Enniskerry, Inisfidhe, Inisanlaoi, Inistymon, Killfobrick, Killaloe, Killoen, Killshanny, Shraduff, and Tomgrany.—Walsh, pp. 372-382.

and on the adjacent islands, the fame of Arran attracting crowds from afar. People braved the fury of the Atlantic to seek the spiritual favours enjoyed by those who dwelt on "Arran of the Saints." The ancient abbey of KILCONNELL,[142] county Galway, was founded by St. Conall in the fifth century: he was known as one of "the Four beautiful Saints of Ireland," the brother of the holy virgin Athracta, and was probably consecrated by St. Patrick himself. It seems that the foundation of St. Brendan's great monastic school of CLONFERT [143] was predicted by our National Apostle when in the South of Ireland. Under the holy abbot's own guidance many thousand fervent monks sanctified themselves by the practice of prayer and penance, and "by the labour of their hands."

St. Colman was founder of the abbey and Episcopal See of KILMACDUAGH,[144] also in the county Galway. Dating from the sixth century, Kilmacduagh was so called because of St. Colman being the son of Duagh, scion of a family of the race of Hy-Fiachra, from which the representatives of many ancient Irish clans can still trace descent. St. Colman is frequently spoken of as being most devoted to asceticism, having long lived as a hermit before the establishment of the great monastic institution which has been chiefly instrumental in perpetuating his fame. His latest successor in the See of Kilmacduagh—united with that of Kilfenora—before its having been finally placed under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Galway, was the late Most Rev. Dr. Patrick Fallon (also of the Hy-Fiachra race), who, after governing those dioceses zealously for twenty years—A.D. 1853-1873—at length resigned the pastoral charge in order to emulate St. Colman's spirit of austere asceticism among the sons of St. Paul of the Cross.

[142] Lanigan, I. p. 429 (note).
[143] "Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum," p. 220.
[144] Ware (Dublin, 1705), p. 20. See "Arch-diocese of Tuam."

The abbey of INISQUIN [145]—an island of Lough Corrib, county Galway—was one of those attributed to St. Brendan of Clonfert. In the sixth century an abbey was established on another island of Lough Corrib by St. Fursey ; and was known as RATHMAT, or KILLFURSA.[146] Fursey was, likewise, one of the "Four beautiful Saints of Ireland"—meriting the title, no doubt, by reason of his fervour in insisting upon charity, humility and obedience as the means leading the devout soul nearest to God : for all evils and miseries arise from the neglect of these virtues. His zeal in preaching this sublime doctrine caused him to make a missionary pilgrimage from end to end of Ireland. St. Cuanna, a relative of St. Carthag of Lismore, was founder of the abbey of KILLCOONAGH[147] in the same century: and in this century, too, St. Fechin established the abbey of IMAY [148]—an island off the coast of Galway said to have been the last stronghold of Paganism in the country. It was through St. Fechin's persevering efforts that the people of Imay yielded to the influence of the Gospel, and devoted their beloved island to the service of Christ. The same saint is supposed to have been the founder of the abbey of ARDOILEN,[149] another island in the county Galway. And in the eighth century, St. Boadan established the abbey of CLONTUSKERT [150] not very far from St Brendan's great monastic school.

Having resigned his See, St. Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne, founded, in the course of the sixth century, an abbey at MAYO [151] for his English disciples : hence the title—"Mayo of the Saxons." St. Gerald, an Englishman who opened an abbey at ELITHERIA,[152] county Mayo, succeeded St. Colman ; and Saints Muredach and Aidan

[145-148] Walsh, pp. 462, 468, 464, 461. The Annalists also refer to the following as sites of ancient monastic institutions in the Co. Galway :—Anascrath, Dundrynan, Fidhard, Inis-an-Ghoill, Kilbrenan, Kilcolgan, Killfaile, Killoebhain, Killmacdara, and Kilmurry.—Walsh, pp. 445-466.

[149-151] Archdall, pp. 272, 282, 505. [152] "Appendix Monastica," p. 734.

were also abbots of Mayo. During his exile from England king Alfred is said to have studied in this great monastery. In his poem in praise of Ireland, he tells us that he found "Connaught renowned for justice, hospitality, lasting vigour and fame." The abbey of INISBOPHIN [153] is, moreover, attributed to St. Colman. Donald, son of Aodh, King of Ireland, founded the abbey of CONG,[154] A.D. 624. Saints Fechin and Mollaga were abbots there; and there, too, in the year 1198, died the aged King Roderick O'Connor, who had spent the close of his life at Cong; but whose remains were taken to Clonmacnoise for interment.

The abbey of ROSCOMMON [155] was founded by St. Coman, whose death occurred about the year 743. Although extremely severe, the monastic Rule of this Saint became very popular throughout Connaught; and his abbey soon acquired much fame as a home of holiness and learning. St. Aodan was the holy founder's immediate successor. As in the case of many other ancient Irish abbeys, the succession of abbots was uninterrupted here, notwithstanding the ravages of the Danes, until the reign of Queen Elizabeth; having passed into the possession of the Canons Regular in the course of the twelfth century. St. Liberius (fifth century) founded the abbey of INCHMORE,[156] an island of Loughree, county Roscommon. In the same county there are the sites of two other ancient abbeys: the one at INCHMACNERIN [157]; the second at EASMACNEIRE,[158] both said to have been founded by St. Columba before his exile from Ireland; the latter, however, was placed under the care of the abbot St. Dochonna.

[153] Alemand, p. 79.

[154] [155] Walsh, pp. 564, 633. Among the many ancient sanctuaries of the Co. Mayo are to be included, moreover, those of Aghagower, Aghamore, Balla, Ballentully, Ballina-glass, Bophen Island, Crossmolina, Inisgluaire, Killcoman, Kilicran, Killedan, Killnatrinode, Killfinan, Killmoremoyle, Killala, Killnagarvan, Killpatrick, Killbride, Killfian, Killin, Killroe, Loughcon, Leacnamanagh, Odacheera, Templemurry, Rathcolp, Tarmoncarra, and Tearmonderbhile.—Walsh, pp. 555-585.

[156-158] Archdall, pp. 612, 611, Ibid.

Probably the abbey of CLONTUSKERT,[159] also in the county Roscommon, was established by a St. Faithlaca; while the holy Berach—disciple of St. Dageus, and of St. Kevin of Glendalough—is claimed as founder of the abbey of CLOONCRAFT,[160] about A.D. 600. And St. Evin, the contemporary of St. Molua of Clonfert-Molua, was founder of the abbey of MONASTEREVAN.[161] There was still another abbey in this county which seems to have been overlooked by some writers: that of ATHLEAGUE,[162] wherein the abbot Macliosa O'Hanayn died in the year 1206. The name, we are told, is a corruption of "Athliag"—the ford of the stones—the site of the ancient monastery being by the river Suck; and because a tone time St. Maenagan was venerated there, the place was, likewise, known as "Ath-liag-Maenagain" . . . The inscription on the slab of a very old tomb in the humble burial-ground, now indicating the site of the original abbey, reminds the present writer of the sad reason why our ancestors were compelled to anglicize their ancient Irish names. For several generations the descendants of one of the "Transplanters" (A.D. 1653) have found their last resting-place there; although in its English form the name may not otherwise be very suggestive of the painful memories of those dread Penal Days. Among others (A.D. 1765-1839) is the name of the father of a zealous priest who laboured at his sacred calling in the same neighbourhood for over fifty years; and whose remains lie interred in the parish church of Fuerty, close by Our Lady's altar, whereon he had best loved to offer the Holy Sacrifice towards the end of his long missionary career[163] . . . .

St. Patrick is said to have established the abbey of DRIUMMEA,[164] county Sligo; and in the same county

[159] "Lewis's Topographical Dictionary of Ireland" (London, 1837), I., p. 379. [160-162] Walsh, pp. 627, 633, 623.
[163] The late Very Rev. Canon Martin Rushe, P.P. (O'Luachair).
[164] Walsh, p. 638.

St. Finnian of Clonard is mentioned as the founder of the abbey of ACHONRY [165]—A.D. 560—over which, and the Episcopal See of that name, he appointed his disciple, St. Nathy. This became one of our great Irish monastic schools; St. Fechin of Fore studied there — the accredited founder of the abbeys of BALLYSADARE,[166] BOYLE,[167] KILLNAMANAGH,[168] DRUMRATH,[169] and KILLGHARBAN,[170] all in the county Sligo. St. Molaisse founded the abbey of KILMALTON [171] during the seventh century; and St. Manchan established that of MOHILL,[172] in the county Leitrim.

Even this passing allusion to so many of our more ancient sanctuaries will suffice to bring vividly before the mind Ireland's former glory as a "Second Thebaid": yet we are assured that but comparatively few of the names of those early monastic institutions have survived the lapse of time. The list of the nunneries established throughout Ireland for the holy women who, from the beginning, would emulate the austerities of the Irish monks of old, is also sadly incomplete; here, however, we may only make briefest mention of these foundations, known to have been once the homes of numbers of Erin's saintly daughters—not even pausing to dwell on the glories of St. Brigid's great establishment at KILDARE [173] A.D. 480.

St. Patrick is said to have founded "monasteries for

[165-172] Ibidem, pp. 640-651. "Appendix Monastica," p. 735. The following places, also, are claimed as having been the sites of other ancient monasteries in the Co. Roscommon:—Ailechmor, Ardcarne, Basleacomor, Briola, Cluainborean, Cluainmuin, Cluainnamanagh, Domnaghmore, Maghseola, Fidhard, Killchule, Killukin, Killomy, Maghseola, Monasterevan, Oran, Teaghnanighean, Teagh-Baithen, and Toberelly.—Walsh, pp. 622-636. While in the Co. Sligo there were the ancient abbeys of Aughross, Ardsenliss, Ballinley, Bile, Caille, Caillevinde, Cashel Jorra, Cloghermore, Cradbhgrellain, Drumcliffe, Drumrath, Drumcollumb, Eachenach, Emleachfada, Enachard, Glendallain, Inismurray, Killcairpre, Killaraght, Killanley, Killuathren, Killmacoen, and Skrine.—Walsh, pp. 638-652. And in the Co. Leitrim the ancient sanctuaries of Annaduff, Cooncholling, Drumlias, Feenah, Killdareis, Killnaille.—Walsh, pp. 517-519.

virgins" at CLONEBRONE [174] and DRUIMCHEO,[175] county Longford; at TEMPLE-BRIGID [176] and TEMPLE-FEARTA,[177] county Armagh; at KILLARAGHT,[178] county Roscommon; and at DRUIMDUBHAIN,[179] county Tyrone. St. Kieran of Saigir established a nunnery for his mother, St. Lidania at KILLIADHUIN [180] in the King's County; that of CARRICKFERGUS,[181] county Antrim, was founded by St. Darerca during the fifth century; the same saint being responsible for the nunnery of KILL-SLIEVE-CUILIN,[182] county Armagh. The nunnery of ROSS-ORRY,[183] county Fermanagh, is attributed to St. Fanchea; and to St. Conchea that of ROSS-BEN-CHOIR,[184] county Clare. It is certain that there was a similar great establishment at CLONMACNOISE [185] from a very early date; while, in the sixth century, St. Regnacia, sister of St. Finnian of Clonard, established a nunnery at REYNAGH,[186] in the King's county; one, also, at TEAGHTELLE [187] in Westmeath; and in the county Clare, one at a place called KILCARRAGH.[188] The principal foundation of the great St. Ita was at CLUAIN-CREADHUIL,[189] or KILITA, county Limerick. St. Gobnata had a nunnery at BALLYVOURNEY,[190] county Cork, during the sixth century; that of ENAGHDUNE,[191] county Galway, was established by St. Brendan of Clonfert for his sister St. Briga. There was also a nunnery at FAUGHER,[192] county Louth—St. Brigid's birth-place—which owed its origin to St. Monenna in the seventh century; St. Segretia's nunnery at MAYO [193] dated from the same century; and in the course of the eighth St. Tigernach founded that of DOIREMELLE,[194] county Leitrim, for his mother, St. Mella. . . . So that we may well infer what part the holy virgins of Ireland had in securing for their country the glory of a title as beautiful, and not less significant than that of "The Island of Scholars and Saints."

[173-188] Walsh—Conf. "Appendix Monastica," p. 735.
[189-194] *f.* "Appendix Monastica," pp. 735, 736.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CANONS REGULAR.

THERE are writers who maintain that the Canons Regular date their origin from the time of the Apostles; but it was only between the years 1059 and 1063 that these religious received formal recognition as one of the monastic Orders.[1] For at that particular epoch the Canons became strictly bound to community-life and to the renunciation of property, in virtue of decrees passed by Councils specially convened in Rome for this purpose under Popes Nicholas II. and Alexander II. at the instance of St. Peter Damian. The Rule proposed to the new Order was based on St. Augustine's well-known treatise on the sacerdotal state; and on that "hundred and ninth letter," which is, practically, a code of monastic discipline drawn up by the great Doctor himself for those nuns who had placed themselves under his spiritual direction. Hence, the Canons Regular were said to have adopted the "Rule of St. Augustine," being now quite distinct from the Secular Canons, who were connected with the Cathedral Churches. The Order became widely known throughout Europe in the course of the twelfth century; branching off eventually into various Congregations, called into existence merely because of modifications in the observance of the original Rule.

The Canons Regular were first introduced into Ireland about the year 1126 by Imar, the holy and learned

[1] "Histoire du Clergé Seculier et Regulier" (Brunel, 1716), I. p. 126 *sq.* Alemand, p. 97. "A Catholic Dictionary" (London, 1885), p. 56. Lanigan, vol. i., p. 186 *sq.*, (note, 133).

preceptor of St. Malachy O'Moore. They soon grew very popular all over the country; and it was chiefly through their assistance that St. Malachy, after he had become Archbishop of Armagh, was enabled to effect those reforms in the Irish Church so highly praised by St. Bernard. For the Rule of the Canons Regular had to be fervently observed in all the abbeys over which St. Malachy claimed jurisdiction.[2] This great Prelate succeeded in inspiring a further enthusiasm for the monastic state by establishing in one of his abbeys a community of monks taken directly from the monastery of Clairvaux.

Following the order of our annalists, we find that an abbey for Canons Regular, of the Congregation of St. Victor,[3] was dedicated to SAINT THOMAS[4] in the city of Dublin, its principal benefactor being William FitzAdlem during the reign of Henry II., who himself made a large donation to the same community in the year 1178. The fact of the names of St. Laurence O'Toole and of the Papal Legate, Cardinal Vivian, being mentioned in connection with the royal gift, suggests that it may have been an act of atonement on the king's part for his complicity in the death of the martyred Archbishop of Canterbury. A long list of the names of other benefactors of this abbey has come down to us; specifying, moreover, the nature and conditions of the various donations, and leading one to infer that the Canons of St. Thomas's were possessed of great wealth: whereas, as a matter of fact, so numerous were the dependents on their charity that their revenues barely sufficed to meet their most pressing needs. In virtue of his office, the abbot of this house took rank as a Baron in Parliament.

Unhappily the monastic chronicles of Ireland are often

[2] Lanigan, IV., p. 59 *sq.*
[3] Archdall, p. 178.
[4] "Histoire du Clergé," I., p. 213. (This Congregation was founded in Paris, A.D. 1113).

most complete in what relates to temporal possessions; owing to the sad reason of their being drawn, to a considerable extent, from the official inventories made by those appointed to plunder the monks by order of King Henry VIII., and of his daughter, Queen Elizabeth. But as for the interest of the spoilers extending to the past history of the venerable institutions which they had come to suppress; they studiously endeavoured, on the contrary, to destroy the archives of each abbey containing all important documents—especially such as showed how loyal the monks had been in carrying out the wishes of those who would have them their almoners among the poor.[5]

The actual site of Trinity College, Dublin, was once occupied by a priory of the Canons Regular of the Congregation of Aroasia.[6] It was placed under the invocation of ALL SAINTS,[7] having been built by Diarmid Mac-Murchard, King of Leinster, in the year 1166, and numbering the notorious Strongbow among its most liberal benefactors.[8] Then, there was, also, the Priory of the MOST HOLY TRINITY[9] into which St. Laurence O'Toole introduced a community of Canons Regular of the Congregation of Arras, A.D. 1163. This house is said to have been established in the year 1038 by Donatus, Archbishop of Dublin, most generously assisted by Sitric, the Danish Prince of the City. St. Laurence

[5] It may be remarked, however, that the "Callendars of Papal Registers" (Rolls Series), the "Report of Public Records in Ireland" (A.D. 1869, *sq.*), and "The Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin" (Gilbert: Dublin, A.D. 1889, vols. i-vii.) furnish much interesting information, of which I may not here avail myself, owing to the limited scope of my task.—J. P. R.

[6] "Histoire du Clergé," I., p. 188. (This Congregation dated from the year 1090).

[7] Archdall, p. 174.

[8] The Superior was a spiritual Peer of the Realm.

[9] Archdall, 147. There was also in the city of Dublin the abbey of "St. Olaves," built by an English colony from Bristol, to whom Henry II. had granted absolute control in municipal affairs. As for the monastery of Witeschan, it is assigned to a community of "Sac Friars," who came to Ireland in the year 1268; but this Order was suppressed in the Council of Vienne A.D. 1311.—Walsh, pp. 423-424.

O'Toole himself lived there as a member of the community, giving the greatest edification by his beautiful spirit of humility. Fearing, however, that his austerities might raise him in the esteem of the religious, he was wont to make lengthy retreats amid the wilds of Glendalough ; thus impressing upon the monks the first object of their holy vocation : to influence the world by keeping their own souls in constant union with God. This monastery was, also, called " Christ-church " ;[10] and became famous as a place of pilgrimage, because of the many precious Relics preserved there ; among others, the celebrated "Staff of Jesus." But all perished at the hands of the Iconoclasts of the sixteenth century, the priory and its possessions serving as a reward for some of those courtier prelates who had basely yielded to the wishes of an unscrupulous king.

In speaking of Christ-church, we may draw attention to the very unusual fact of there having been two Cathedrals in the city of Dublin. That of St. Patrick was founded in the year 1190,[11] on the site of an ancient church supposed to have been built by the Saint himself ; the principal reason for its establishment being merely to satisfy the devotion of the pious people to their National Apostle. Although enjoying all the privileges of a Cathedral, it was distinctly understood that the prior and community of Christ-church should take precedence of the Dean and Chapter of St. Patrick's. And it was finally arranged, on account of some controversy that arose in the year 1300, that the Archbishops of Dublin should be consecrated and enthroned in the priory of Holy Trinity. St. Patrick's, like Christ-church, was seized by the royal agents in the course of the sixteenth century.

[10] " Histoire du Clergé," I., p. 168. (Founded A.D. 1066). Walsh, pp. 107, 422.

[11] " A History of the City of Dublin " (Gilbert : A.D. 1854), I., p. 104.

The Canons Regular of the Congregation of St. Victor had also a priory at LUCAN,[12] county Dublin. It was endowed, under the patronage of St. Catherine, in the year 1219, by Warrifius Peche—"for his own soul's welfare, and for the repose of the souls of all his deceased relatives and friends." This foundation was united to the abbey of St. Thomas, Dublin, some time before the suppression of the Irish monasteries. Sitric, son of Murchard, built a priory for Canons Regular at INIS-PATRICK,[13] in the same county. A famous Synod was held there in the year 1148, at which St. Malachy assisted as Papal legate. The site of this monastery was found altogether unsuitable, so Henry de Londres, Archbishop of Dublin, allowed the community to change to HolmPatrick, thus named because St. Patrick is said to have disembarked there on coming to preach the Faith in Ireland. There was another foundation made for the Canons Regular at CASTLEKNOCK [14] by Richard Tyrell, who undertook this work of piety in honour of St. Brigid some time in the thirteenth century.

St. Mary's abbey, KILRUSHE,[15] county Kildare, was established in the thirteenth century for a community of Canons Regular, its principal benefactor being William Mareschal, Earl of Pembroke; in the previous century a priory of the same Order had been endowed at NAAS,[16] by the Baron of Naas, and dedicated to St. John Baptist. In the county Kildare, also, Myler FitzGerald erected the priory of GREAT CONALL [17] on the banks of the river Liffey, A.D. 1202. The first community of this house was taken from the abbey of Lanthony in Monmouthshire, Our Lady and St. David being the Heavenly Patrons, and its prior holding rank as a "lord of Parliament" although not often called upon to exercise his functions in that capacity. An effort was made to

[12] Archdall, p. 254. [13] Ibidem, p. 218. [14] Ibid., p. 131.
[15] Ibid., p. 332. [16] Walsh p. 489.

save Great Conall at the suppression of the monasteries of the Pale; but eventually the lands and buildings fell to the share of one of Queen Elizabeth's favourites. The Canons Regular of St. Victor had the priory of St. Woolstan's, near LEIXLIP,[18] built for them in the year 1205 by Adam de Hereford; in 1538 King Henry VIII. disposed of it to reward a certain Allan of Norfolk, the then Master of the Rolls.

It seems that King Diarmid MacMurchard was seized with remorse for having sacked the town of FERNS [19] in the year 1166; for we find that he replaced the ancient abbey founded there by St. Aidan in the sixth century by a monastery for Canons Regular which he richly endowed and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Some writers maintain that the abbey of SELSKER,[20] also in the county Wexford, owed its origin to the Danes after their conversion. It dated from early in the twelfth century, and was under the protection of Saints Peter and Paul, the Roches, a powerful Wexford family, being its most generous benefactors. The superior of this house, also, sat as a Baron in Parliament. Its fate at the Suppression was, of course, the same as that of the other Irish monasteries. The priory of DOWN,[21] county Wexford, was built in the eventful year, 1172; and soon afterwards Gerald de Prendergast founded the priory of ENNISCORTHY [22]; on condition, however, that it should be subject to the abbey of St. Thomas, Dublin. The foundation at Enniscorthy was under the patronage of St. John the Evangelist: it is interesting to note that the monastic buildings and lands passed into the possession of Edmund Spenser eventually; a fact, however, not likely to render the great poet's memory more endeared to the Catholics of Ireland.

St. John's abbey—so called because under the invo-

[17-19] Ibidem, pp. 482, 488, 706. [20] Ware, Ant., p. 81.
[21] Archdall, p. 735. [22] Lewis, vol. i., p. 603 *sq.*; Archdall, p. 740.

cation of the Evangelist—was founded in the city of KILKENNY,[23] A.D. 1211, by William Mareschal, Earl of Pembroke, for the relief of the poor, who should thenceforth have the Canons Regular to appeal to in times of greater distress. The abbey became municipal property after the wholesale confiscation of the Irish monasteries; the new owners being sadly unmindful of the sacred claims of the poor. There was a priory at INISTIOGE,[24] county Kilkenny, dedicated to "Our Lady and St. Columba," and built by Thomas FitzAnthony in the year 1206. This good work was undertaken at the suggestion of Hugh Rufus, Bishop of Ossory, who had been himself a Canon Regular in the abbey of Bodmin, Cornwall; and before his elevation to the episcopate had held the office of prior at Kells in the county Kilkenny. The priory of the "Blessed Virgin Mary of KELLS"[25] was built, A.D. 1193, by Geoffry FitzRobert, who brought over its first community from the abbey of Bodmin: Strongbow is mentioned as one of the chief benefactors of the priory of Kells. The Blanchfield family, also, are said to have endowed a priory for the Canons Regular at FERTAGH,[26] county Kilkenny, sometime during the thirteenth century, placing it under the protection of St. Kieran.

Allusion is made to only one foundation of the Canons Regular in the county Carlow: that of the priory of St. Stephen, said to have been established in the eleventh century at OLD LEIGHLIN[27] by a Norwegian captain, named Burchard; it seems to have been dissolved by the authority of Pope Eugene IV. in the year 1432. In the Queen's County, also, there appears to have been but one house of the Order: the priory of AGHMACART,[28] dedicated to St. Tigernach; and built on the site of the ancient abbey by the O'Dempsey family.

[23] Ibidem, p. 368. [24] Ibid., p 359.
[25-28] Walsh, pp. 494, 492, 368, 616.

The O'Kellys founded a priory for the Canons at DULEEK,[29] county Meath, in honour of the Blessed Virgin during the reign of King Edward the Third. It would seem that the hospital established in the same place about the year 1403 was entrusted to the care of this community. Walter de Lacy endowed the monastery of St. Peter at CLONARD [30] in the twelfth century; that of COLPE,[31] on the Boyne, being founded in the year 1182 by Hugh de Lacy, the Elder, and made subject to the Canons Regular of Lanthony in Wales. Towards the end of the twelfth century, an abbey was founded for the same Order at NAVAN [32] by Joceline Nangle and dedicated to Our Lady. John Bole was abbot there in the year 1450; and obtained a Bull from Pope Nicholas V., granting an Indulgence to all who should visit the abbey and contribute to the keeping of the church and monastery in repair. The Canons Regular had also an abbey at NEWTOWN,[33] built by Simon de Rochfort, Bishop of Meath, A.D. 1206. Like the Cathedral-church, this monastery was under the invocation of Saints Peter and Paul. An English nobleman, named Jordan Comin, endowed a priory at BALLYBOGGAN [34] during the course of the twelfth century, in honour of the Blessed Trinity. And there was an abbey of the Canons Regular, under the protection of St. Mary Magdalen, at RATOATH,[35] still in a prosperous condition, A.D. 1456; but the only other fact known concerning it is that of its suppression in the year 1538.

Ralph Petit, Bishop of Meath, founded a priory for the Canons Regular at MULLINGAR,[36] county Westmeath, A.D. 1227, which became popularly known through the country as "The House of God." About the end of the twelfth century Geoffrey de Constantine endowed a priory in the same county at TRISTERNACH,[37] in honour

[29-31] Walsh, pp. 598, 593, 594.
[32-36] Archdall, pp. 558, 560, 514, 568, 722. Alemand, pp. 31-45.
[37] Archdall, p. 729. Alemand, pp. 31-45.

GLENDALOUGH. (p. 33.)

of the Blessed Virgin, the Bishops of Ardagh being always among its most generous patrons.

In the course of the thirteenth century one of the Dillons of Drumrany built a monastery for the Canons Regular on the site of the ancient abbey of INISAINGAN,[38] county Longford. It was granted to Sir Patrick Barnwall at the Suppression. About the same time another house was established for the Order at DEIRG,[39] also in the county Longford. The pious founder's name was Gormgall O'Quinn.

The ancient abbey of LOUTH [40] was restored by Donchad O'Carrol, prince of Orgiel, and Edan O'Kelly, Bishop of Clogher, for a community of Canons Regular ; and placed under the patronage of Our Lady. The church was consecrated by St. Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh. This devout prince of Orgiel also endowed the abbey of Saints Peter and Paul at KNOCK,[41] near Louth. His own death is recorded as having occurred there in the year 1168. Marianus O'Gorman, the Hagiologist, who was superior of this abbey, died A.D. 1181 ; and in 1471 we find that the abbot of Knock was heavily fined for having dared to profess "a mere Irishman" there, contrary to the infamous statute—framed to perpetuate those racial prejudices which from the beginning have caused so much misery and suffering in Ireland.

When the renowned Imar was abbot of the monastery of ARMAGH,[42] A.D. 1126, he introduced into his community the reformed Rule of the Canons Regular ; while St. Malachy, his zealous disciple, re-built the ancient abbey of SAUL,[43] county Down, in the year 1138, for religious of the same Order. St. Malachy also restored the once far-famed abbey of BANGOR,[44] in the same county ; and soon the virtues and learning of the Canons Regular there recalled the glory which Bangor had attained in

[38-42] Archdall, pp. 441, 439, 471, 466, 24.
[43-44] Archdall, pp. 128, 108.

the days of St. Comgall. This was the beginning of the grand revival of Monasticism in the Irish Church, whereby St. Malachy so far succeeded in rousing the fervour of both clergy and laity, that the words of the Psalmist: "Thou hast visited the earth, and hast plentifully watered it; Thou hast many ways enriched it"[45] —were afterwards applied to Ireland by the holy abbot of Clairvaux.

In brief, we may say that the great St. Malachy was, probably, born at Bangor in the year 1095. On his return thither from the monastic school of Lismore, A.D. 1125, he was appointed abbot; although at this time the abbey of Bangor seems to have been little better than a ruin, owing to the frequent ravages of the Danes. St. Bernard assures us that as many as nine hundred of its monks were slain on one occasion by these ruthless raiders.[46] However, St. Malachy was not discouraged by the difficulties of the tremendous task before him: resolved to assume the duties as well as the title of abbot of Bangor. Accordingly, he built a little wooden oratory amid the ruins of the ancient abbey; erecting cells for his monks around it, as Ireland's holy Founders had been wont to do. And thus, while devoting himself to a life of greatest austerity, he perfected that work of reform which was destined to confirm the nation's claim to be regarded once more as "An Island of Saints: the Western Thebaid." He sent some of his own disciples to Clairvaux in order that they might be trained by St. Bernard himself in the monastic spirit; from that famous abbey, too, he brought over a community of the Cistercian monks to Ireland. God willed that he should, likewise, die there in the arms of St. Bernard, A.D. 1148; and in the year 1190 he was canonized by

[45] Ps. lx., 10.

[46] Divi Bernardi, Op. "Liber de Vita S. Malachiæ Ep.," p. 1961 *sq.* Lanigan, IV., pp. 59, 133. Mention is also made of a foundation of this Order at Toberglory, Co. Down.—Walsh, p. 419.

Pope Clement the Third. Never once had St. Malachy wavered in carrying out his glorious project; although the obstacles which he had to contend with appeared almost insurmountable at times; but he was always supported by Rome; and he freely utilized his position as Archbishop of Armagh and Papal legate to forward the sublime purpose which alone he had ever in view.

Some time before the Anglo-Norman Invasion, the O'Brian Carrog is said to have restored the ancient abbey at DISEART-KELLACH, or KELLS,[47] county Antrim, for a community of Canons Regular, as an act of devotion in honour of the Blessed Virgin. The O'Cahane built a priory for the same Order at DUNGIVEN,[48] in the county Derry. The church and cemetery were solemnly restored for the exercise of Divine worship by the Archbishop of Armagh, A.D. 1397, having previously been desecrated by the shedding of human blood.

MacNoelus MacKenlif, King of Ulster, endowed an abbey for the Canons Regular at LISGOOL,[49] county Fermanagh, A.D. 1106, placing it under Our Lady's protection. It seems that this monastery was to have been rebuilt on a more suitable site by the Maguire, a lord of Fermanagh; but the pious work remained uncompleted by the time of the Suppression under King Henry the Eighth.

In MUNSTER, a priory for the Canons Regular of St. Victor, was established near the city of WATERFORD,[50] and is supposed to have dated from the conversion of the Danes, some of whom endowed it in honour of St. Catherine. Pope Innocent III. confirmed this community in all their possessions about the year 1210, Elias FitzNorman being at the time one of their most generous benefactors. The priory of Waterford is said to have been always in a flourishing state until the Suppression of the Irish monasteries.

[47-49] Walsh, pp. 365, 401, 443.

The ancient abbey of St. Finbarr in the city of CORK [51] was restored, A.D. 1134, by King Cormac of Desmond, who placed it under the patronage of St. John Baptist. We are told that the holy abbot Giolla, of Cork, assisted at the famous Synod of Kells in the year 1152, where there were present very many Bishops and fully three thousand Priests. Philip de Barry endowed a priory for the Canons at BALLYBEG,[52] county Cork, in honour of St. Thomas. His grandson David, also, proved a generous benefactor to the religious of this house. Then, there was a priory at BRIDGETOWN,[53] on the Blackwater, richly endowed by the Roches during the reign of King John. The first community came partly from Newtown, county Meath, partly from the abbey of St. Thomas, Dublin; and it was dedicated to Our Blessed Lady. During this reign, too, a priory was built in the same county at TULLELASH [54] by Matthew MacGriffin: the Canons had, besides, another foundation not far from the city of Cork at a place called WEEME,[55] under the protection of St. John the Evangelist; and one at the CORBE of O'MOLAGGIE,[56] concerning which merely the fact of its existence is known.

In the city of LIMERICK [57] a certain Simon Minor built a priory for the Canons Regular in the time of King John, under the invocation of Saints Mary and Edward. Another pious man, named Harvey, erected a priory at RATHKEALE,[58] as an act of homage to Our Lady, A.D. 1200; at the close of the same century, this house was richly endowed by Eleonora Purcell. The abbey for Canons Regular at KYNNETHIN,[59] county Limerick, dated from some time in the thirteenth century also.

Donald O'Brien, King of Limerick, rebuilt the ancient abbey of INISLAUNACHT,[60] county Tipperary, for a community of the Canons Regular in the year 1184.

[50-53] Archdall, pp. 698, 62 *sq.*, 56, 57 (Walsh, p. 384).
[54-55] Archdall, p. 80, Ibid. [56-59] Walsh, pp. 394, 530, 533, 530.

Among its benefactors was Malachy O'Foelan, that heroic prince of the Decies, whose gallant defence of Waterford against the Anglo-Norman invaders obtained for the city the proud title of "Urbs Intacta," which it holds to the present day. For many a year, we are told, the mere mention of the name O'Foelan sufficed to fill the most daring of those adventurers with awe. The priory of Athassel [61]—A.D. 1200—is attributed to William FitzAdlem de Burgo, who would thus prove his devotion to St. Edmund, King and Confessor. The superior took rank as a Baron in Parliament. About the same time, a priory was established at Nenagh [62] by Theobald Walter, head of the Butler family. It was also known as "the Hospital of St. John"; there was a permanent obligation on the community there to receive and care for the infirm and poor. The priory of Our Lady was built at Cahir [63] by Geoffry de Camvil during the reign of King John; at the same epoch William de Cantwell and his wife Dionysia founded a monastery for Canons Regular at Carrick-on-Suir,[64] dedicating it to St. John the Baptist.

The priory of Killagh,[65] county Kerry, under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, was established some time in the thirteenth century, by Geoffry de Mariscis; the prior was a spiritual peer of the Realm. There was a priory at Rathboy,[66] also, dating from the same century, and dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. A Canon Regular named William was the founder.

Clare [67] abbey was another of the monastic institutions generously endowed by Donald O'Brien, King of Limerick, in honour of the holy Apostles (A.D. 1195). He was also founder of the priory of Inis-Na-Gananagh,[68] county Clare, about the same time.

In the county Galway, there was a priory of the Canons Regular at Aughrim,[69] built by Theobald

[60-62] Ibidem, pp. 656-671.

Butler, during the course of the thirteenth century, and dedicated to St. Catherine. ABBEY-GORMOGAN,[70] in the same county, was established by the O'Gormogan in honour of the Blessed Virgin, A.D. 1308. And there was an abbey at ENAGHDUNE,[71] dating, probably, from the thirteenth century; but it is doubtful whether the community were Canons Regular or members of the Order of St. Norbert.

Cathal O'Connor, king of Connaught, was founder of the abbey of BALLINTOBBER,[72] county Mayo, having undertaken this pious work in honour of the Most Holy Trinity, A.D. 1216. The abbots of this monastery built the priory of CROSS,[73] in the same county, and placed it under the protection of the Blessed Virgin. ANNAGH[74] priory owed its origin to Walter de Burgo, who was a great benefactor to the community there in the fifteenth century.

The Canons Regular had a priory at LISDUFF[75] in the county Roscommon, dating, probably, from the thirteenth century, and dependent on the abbey of Cong. In the course of the same century the O'Connors established a priory at DERANE.[76] Con O'Flanagan endowed a similar institution at KILLMORE[77] in honour of Our Lady; it was consecrated by Donagh O'Connor, Bishop of Elphin, A.D. 1232.

. . . . The Canons Regular had, undoubtedly, many other foundations in Ireland of which we have no record now; and we have seen that a number of the ancient abbeys were handed over to them in the course of the twelfth century. However, sufficient has been said to show how popular the Order became throughout

[70-71] Walsh, pp. 657, 658, 474, 476, 372, 375, 445, 444, 454. The Canons Regular are said to have had houses at Carrick, also in the county Tipperary; and at Inchycronane in the county Clare.—Walsh, pp. 865, 373.

[72-73] Archdall, pp. 495, 501.

[74] Walsh, p. 632.

[75-79] Archdall, pp. 609, 613, 172, 216, 173.

the country from the revival of Monasticism in the time of St. Malachy O'Moore.

Of the nunneries established in Ireland for pious women desirous of living according to the Rule of the Canons Regular, express mention is made of that founded in DUBLIN [78] by Dermot MacMurchard, King of Leinster, in the year 1146; and of the convent of GRACE-DIEU [79] in the county Dublin, built by John Comyn, who governed the Archdiocese, A.D. 1190. The present Dame Street, Dublin, also, derives its name from a nunnery known as "SAINTE MARIE DEL DAM." [80] It is also said that the King of Leinster endowed a house for the "Canonesses" at KILLCLEEHEEN,[81] county Kilkenny, A.D. 1151; and one in the county Carlow at ATHADDY, about the same time.

O'Melaghlin, King of Meath, was founder of a nunnery at CLONARD,[82] sometime before the Anglo-Norman invasion: towards the end of the twelfth century the MacMahon family built a convent for the same Order at TERMON-FECHIN,[83] county Louth. The Canonesses of TIMOLIN,[84] county Kildare, were indebted for their nunnery to Robert, Baron of Norah, in the reign of King John; and about the year 1200 Walter de Riddlesford founded that of GRANEY[85] in the same county. The Warrens were chief benefactors of the nunnery established at KILLEIGH,[86] King's County, during the course of the twelfth century; the Barnewalls that of ODDER,[87] county Meath (A.D. 1195); while King Donald O'Brien was founder of a nunnery in the city of LIMERICK.[88] Another convent was established in the county Meath at LISMULLEN [89]—A.D. 1240, by Alicia, sister of Richard de la Corner, Bishop of Meath; and the Butlers built a convent, sometime during the fourteenth century, in honour of St. Brigid at MOYLAGH,[90] county Tipperary.

[89] Archdall, pp. 495, 501. See Gilbert's "History of Dublin," p. 158.
[81-90] Walsh, pp. 366, 593, 553, 490, 481, 512, 605, 530, 603, 671

It is quite certain that many other houses were established for these nuns in Ireland before the time of the Suppression ; for it is distinctly stated that seven convents owed obedience to the nunnery of Odder in the county Meath. And there is ample evidence to lead us to infer that the fervour of the holy virgins of the early Irish Church was zealously emulated throughout the country during the Middle Ages.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE NORBERTINES.

ONCE popularly known in Ireland as the "White Canons," the members of the Order of St. Norbert are also called Premonstratensians. For the holy Founder named that remote valley of Picardy "Prémontré," after it had been revealed to him there that he was destined to be the leader of a white-robed host, most zealous in the service of God (A.D. 1119).[1] Having been joined in his lonely retreat by some thirteen companions eager to profit by his example and advice, St. Norbert proposed that they should observe the Rule of the Canons Regular, drawing up at the same time certain Constitutions, characteristic of his own fervent spirit, which rendered a mode of life already very rigid still more severe. And thus was inaugurated an Order that flourished vigorously in the Church until about the time of the French Revolution: comprising at one period of its existence as many as a thousand abbeys, together with numerous priories and provostships; while there were fully five hundred convents of Norbertine nuns. The White Canons of St. Norbert first came to Ireland some time in the twelfth century —probably at that glorious monastic revival due to the unceasing labours of St. Malachy O'Moore.

The abbey of TUAM,[2] county Galway, seems to have been the Mother-house of the Norbertine Order in Ireland. It was dedicated to the Blessed Trinity, and endowed

[1] "Histoire du Clergé," vol. i., p. 234; "A Catholic Dictionary," p. 684.
[2] Alemand, p. 133; Archdall, p. 298.

by a member of the De Burgo family. Some writers are of opinion that it was immediately subject to the abbey of Prémontré; others think that it was under the jurisdiction of the abbots of Podolia, in Poland. Nor is it known whether the members of this community were required to undertake the service of the Cathedral-church: that magnificent structure built by the renowned Aidanus O'Hoissoin, Archbishop of Tuam, between the years 1130 and 1150, King Turlough O'Connor taking an active part in this grand enterprise. Few of the ruins of the original edifice now remain—replaced by the present Cathedral, towards the building of which the late Dr. MacHale (one of the greatest of St. Jarlath's successors) lent powerful aid; and at a time quite as eventful in the history of Ireland as when the famed O'Hoissoin welcomed the White Canons of St. Norbert to Tuam. One of the Anglo-Norman adventurers burned down all the churches there in the year 1204; in 1251 an abbot of this monastery, named Giolla O'Laghtnan, was drowned in the Irish sea. Probably the poet Maurice Gibellan, mentioned as "a Canon of Tuam," was a member of the same community. He was a most learned man, skilled in the laws; a famous philosopher, and gifted with that true poetic instinct, which prevents genius ever descending to unworthy themes.[3] It is also probable that several monks of this abbey were called to govern the See of St. Jarlath; although the very incomplete list furnished by Ware contains no express allusion to their names. At the Suppression, Tuam abbey was granted to the municipal authorities of the town of Athenry, who appear to have been high in the favour of Queen Elizabeth.

A community of White Canons from the abbey of Tuam is said to have been established at ENAGHDUNE[4]—

[3] Ware's "Irish Writers," bk. i., p. 23.

[4] Archdall, p. 283; Lewis, vol. i., p. 29; Ware's "Antiquities," p. 146.

now Annaghdown—county Galway, in the course of time; but some writers hold that this abbey, under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, belonged to the Canons Regular. It is certain, however, that the Canonesses of the Congregation of Aroasia had a nunnery in the same place, built on the site of the ancient sanctuary of St. Briga in possession of which the religious were confirmed by Pope Celestine III., A.D. 1195. Here we may add that Annaghdown had once been a Bishop's See, but was united to the Archdiocese of Tuam some time in the sixteenth century. Extensive ruins of the Norbertine abbey and church are still to be seen on the eastern shore of Lough Corrib. A White Canon, named Nicholas, was abbot of Annaghdown in the year 1311; the Norbertine Bishop John, who was in charge of the diocese of Elphin just before the suppression of the Irish monasteries, may also have been a member of the same community; and Walter Blake, a native of Galway, and a Canon of Annaghdown, was called to govern the See of Clonmacnoise. The last-named prelate was highly esteemed by Pope Sixtus IV., who had intended to appoint him to the Archdiocese of Tuam; but in the meantime he was chosen Bishop of Clonmacnoise, A.D. 1487; his death occurred in the year 1508. It is interesting to find that one of the Catholic institutions to escape notice longest in the reign of Queen Elizabeth was a school dedicated to St. Brendan at Annaghdown, and in charge of two priests—Fathers Clement Skerret and Thady MacInyllis: a fact bitterly deplored, it seems, by the royal agents.

One of the most important houses of the Norbertine Order in Ireland was the abbey of Holy Trinity, established by MacMoylin O'Malchonry, Archdeacon of Elphin, on an island—afterwards known as TRINITY ISLAND[5]—in Loughkee, county Roscommon. The inventory of

[5] Walsh, p. 632; Archdall, p. 614.

its various possessions, made during the reign of Queen Elizabeth (whose agents bestowed it on a man named Robert Harrison), proves how generously this abbey had been endowed. A striking item of interest of this nature refers to a deed of gift under date of the year 1239: it illustrates a custom by no means uncommon among noble Irish ladies at that particular epoch—a testimony to their pious charity. We are told that Lafair Fina, daughter of Cathal Croibhdearg and wife of O'Domhnvill, set aside part of her dower as a donation to the White Canons of Loughkee, the gift comprising a full half of the townland of Rosburn.

Trinity Island was a retreat well calculated to withdraw the mind from the things of this world; and we are assured that even holy Bishops, like Dionysius O'Mordha, were wont to retire thither in order to prepare themselves for death. Many of the White Canons there attained to a high degree of sanctity: among others Gilliosa O'Gibbellan, who flourished in the year 1234. Members of this community, too, were called upon, from time to time, to forsake their beloved retreat to assume the burden of the Episcopate. Thus, Gilliosa O'Mac-Enlyahana O'Connor, abbot of Holy Trinity, was Bishop of Elphin from the year 1285 to 1296; and Charles MacEnlyahana O'Connor, another abbot of this monastery, governed the same diocese from the year 1308; but died, eventually, at an advanced age among his brethren at Loughkee. What has been said concerning the deep interest taken by the members of the different Religious Orders of Ireland in the preservation of the National Annals, is well borne out by the diligence of a certain Norbertine of Holy Trinity during the fifteenth century.[6] To this learned monk we are indebted for the "Annals of Loughkee," written partly in Latin partly in Irish—a treasury of most interesting and

[6] Ware's "Irish Writers," p. 23 (bk. i. cap. xi.).

important information. Perhaps his labours were the fruit of a praiseworthy desire to repair the loss of such documents as had undoubtedly perished, A.D. 1466, in the accidental destruction of the abbey by fire.

One of our Irish Confessors of the Faith was an abbot of Loughkee: the heroic Hugh Mulkeeran.[7] He was arrested in Dublin in the year 1580, and put to a very cruel and ignominious death by the heretics, because they could not prevail on him to renounce his Religion and the monastic profession. His companion in this glorious struggle was the holy Gelasius O'Cullenan, whose wondrous fortitude led as many as five hundred of the apostates back to the Fold of the Church.

There were two other Bishops of Elphin, who may have been members of the Order of St. Norbert. For we are assured that Malachy MacBrien—who died in Rome, A.D. 1302—and his successor, Donagh O'Flanagan (a prelate of great prudence, fervour and hospitality, whose death occurred in the year 1303), were both abbots of the ancient monastery of BEWELY[8]: a corruption of Beaulieu, and, according to Montalembert, a name truly suggestive of its monastic origin. This abbey was in the county Waterford, just a few miles distant from Lismore. But the ruins which are to be seen there mark the site of an establishment belonging to the Knights Hospitaller; so that it is difficult to say for certain whether the Norbertines, or, perhaps, the Canons Regular, had really a foundation there.[9]

The pious O'Malchonry must have had a great veneration for the sons of St. Norbert; it seems he was, likewise, instrumental in establishing them at ATHMOY,[10] county Sligo, taking the first community from the abbey of Holy Trinity, Loughkee. All the property of this

[7] "Our Martyrs" (The Rev. Denis Murphy, S.J.: Dublin, 1896), p. 115
[8] Ware's "Bishops," p. 11. [9] Archdall, p. 685
[10] Walsh, p. 640.

monastery passed into the hands of Robert Harrison at the Suppression, and was finally granted to a certain William Crofton. The same "Clarus O'Mulchonry" is said to have built a third house for the Norbertines in the year 1233 at a place called KILRUISSE,[11] also in the county Sligo, making it subject, however, to the abbey of Holy Trinity. Some are inclined to identify this place with Athmoy, where the ruins of an ancient monastery are still to be seen, a few miles east of Collooney.[12] To the efforts of the zealous O'Mulchonry, moreover, the priory of LOUGHOUTER,[13] county Cavan, owed its origin, A.D. 1294. This foundation was made about two years before his own death, a grant of land having been obtained for the pious purpose from Cathal O'Reilly. Loughkee supplied the members of the first community, the title of the Most Holy Trinity being chosen at the dedication. In the year 1570, Hugh, chief of the Sept O'Reilly, succeeded in renting this abbey from the agents of Queen Elizabeth, hoping that a community of the Norbertines might be permitted to remain there under his immediate protection. But this proved utterly impossible after the Suppression. On the mainland opposite Loughouter was the site of the great abbey of Slanore, founded by St. Columba—the scene of a number of striking miracles: there St. Fechin of Fore restored sight to a St. Colman who had been blind for many years; there, too, St. Ruadhan of Lorrha raised the king of that country from the dead, having prayed to God for him at the earnest entreaty of the sorrowing people.[14]

The Norbertine abbey of WOODBORN,[15] near Carrickfergus, county Antrim, was established in the thirteenth century and dedicated to the Blessed Trinity. Its

[11] Archdall, p. 637. [12] Lewis, vol. ii., p. 204.
[13] Ibidem, p. 42; Walsh, p. 371.
[14] Bollandists, vol. ii., p. 393.
[15] Archdall, p. 7 (Edition, 1873), vol. i., p. 11, Note 31.

principal benefactors were the Bissets, a Scotch family, who, being implicated in the murder of the powerful Earl of Athol, had to leave their own country about the year 1242. They received extensive lands in the county Antrim from King Henry III.; and in atonement for their part in a most heinous crime, they richly endowed the priory of Woodborn, which remained subject, however, to the abbey of Drieburg in Scotland. The site of the new monastery was on the left bank of the river Woodburne—whence the name Woodborn, or Goodborn; but even early in the second half of the seventeenth century not a vestige of the ruined priory remained. For the stones of both church and monastery had been all removed not long after the Suppression, in order to build a mansion for one of Queen Elizabeth's favourites close to the castle of Carrickfergus. This act of desecration was signally punished in the event, the governor of the town seizing on the recently erected building and the adjoining lands. Gillerath MacCouragh was superior of Woodborn in the year 1542, when it fell into the hands of the agents of King Henry the Eighth. A Franciscan Friar, named Edmund MacCana, assures us that on visiting the place in A.D. 1640 he met several old men who remembered having often seen the aged White Canon in their boyhood. After the seizure of Woodburn, the members of the community escaped to Island Magee, where all died eventually. According to the same writer, the remains of a monastic edifice in the vicinity, known among the people as "The Church of the Monks," belonged to another foundation dependent on the priory of Woodburn. Furthermore, Friar MacCana himself saw the ruins of an ancient monastery, three or four miles to the north of Belfast, popularly called "The White Abbey"; but which he seems inclined to assign to the Order of the Knights of St. John.

The Norbertine abbey of BALLYMORE,[16] county Westmeath, dated from the year 1218, when it was founded by the De Lacy family in honour of the Blessed Virgin, the various endowments being confirmed by Papal sanction. Some writers, however, assert that this monastery belonged rather to the Gilbertine Order; but, even so, it might still—according to a provision of the Constitutions of St. Gilbert of Sempringham, in Lincolnshire, A.D. 1148—have been subject to the White Canons of St. Norbert. This abbey may have occupied the site of an ancient sanctuary founded in the same place about the year 700, concerning which nothing further is known. The adjoining church became the cathedral of the heretical bishop of Meath in the time of King Henry VIII. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth the monastic buildings and lands were handed over to one of the royal favourites. As Ballymore was chosen for the head-quarters of the English army in the year 1641, very likely the stones of the ruined abbey were used in the construction of the forts; not a wall is left standing now. The tower to be still seen near the town was part of a strong castle built there by the De Lacys, probably, that family being exceedingly powerful in Ireland when the Norbertines were introduced into Ballymore.

It may prove interesting to explain here how Hugh de Lacy came to be more popular in Ireland than any of the other Anglo-Norman Knights, notwithstanding the fact of his having acquired his vast wealth and possessions by oppressing those at his mercy with "a strong hand." It was probably due to his having gained the friendship of King Roderick O'Connor, whose daughter he married, so extending his influence by this alliance as to excite the jealousy, if not the fear, of even Henry the Second. However, De Lacy easily appeased his

[16] Alemand, p. 136. This author does not state his reason for saying that the abbey was dependent on the Order of St. Norbert. Walsh, p. 689.

royal master by assuming an attitude of most humble submission; so that Henry confirmed him in the possession of the territory of Meath, already bestowed on this dutiful subject; and actually appointed him governor of the city of Dublin. Tiernan O'Rourke had not quietly suffered himself to be thus plundered of his patrimony of East Meath when De Lacy strove to wrest from him the whole of that ancient kingdom. Aged as that prince was, his resistance proved a serious obstacle to De Lacy's ambitious designs. In order to expedite matters, a friendly interview was arranged between the Irish chieftain and the King's favourite, with the result that the helpless O'Rourke fell a victim to an assassin's sword at the instigation of the treacherous De Lacy. The murdered prince's head was sent to Dublin as a very effective illustration of the Anglo-Norman method of dealing with the native Irish.[17]

Eventually, a rumour of De Lacy's ambition to become King of Ireland reached Henry II., who instantly deprived him of his important position as governor of Dublin, nominating to that office in his stead the notorious Philip of Worcester—the most ruthless of all the Anglo-Norman adventurers with whom the Irish people had yet to deal. Soon afterwards King Henry's own son was sent over as "Lord of Ireland"; but we know how Prince John's conduct drove the native chieftains to desperation, so insolent and grasping were he and his court of profligate young nobles. Recognising the grave nature of the mischief done, Henry recalled his worthless son back to England; but was solemnly assured by him that the failure of the mission might be traced to the disloyalty of Hugh De Lacy. Before the now disgraced noble could appear in his royal master's presence to defend his cause, he met with that tragic death, which, as we have seen, was accompanied by certain circum-

[17] "The History of Ireland" (Haverty: Dublin, 1865), p. 227 *sq.*

stances clearly pointing to its being in revenge for, perhaps, the most cowardly of all De Lacy's crimes in Ireland: the base betrayal of the aged Tiernan O'Rourke. Yet this same Hugh De Lacy, whom our annalists have described as "the profaner and destroyer of many churches," was one of those Anglo-Normans who tried to make some reparation for their misdeeds by endowing monastic institutions here in Ireland. And not a few of his descendants—among them the founders of Ballymore abbey—became remarkable for their generosity towards such religious establishments; while, in after ages, they suffered great persecution for their loyalty to the land of their birth, and to the cause of Catholic Truth.

The last foundation of the Irish White Canons of which mention is made was known as "St. Mary's of the Hill" in the city of GALWAY.[18] This priory—situated in the Western suburb, commanding a view of the Bay—owed its origin to the O'Halleran family, the first community coming from the Norbertine abbey of Tuam. By command of Pope Innocent VIII. it passed into possession of the Dominicans of Athenry, A.D. 1488. The after history of "St. Mary's of the Hill" is extremely interesting, inasmuch as it recalls many thrilling episodes in Ireland's glorious struggle for the Faith. When the ruthless Sir Charles Coote was encamped before Galway in the year 1650, the citizens themselves destroyed the monastery; fearing lest it should be occupied by the enemy, who from so commanding a position could soon reduce the town with his guns. But it had previously been arranged with the Dominicans that the citizen should make full compensation by rebuilding the house at the very earliest opportunity, either on the same site or wherever else the members of the community might decide. A copy of this deed of agreement between the

[18] "Monasticon Hibernicum" (Ed. 1876), vol. ii., p. 206, Note 14.

CLONMACNOISE. (p. 36.)

Friars and the Mayor and citizens of Galway is to be seen in "The Annals of West Connaught." However, after the town had surrendered "on very good and honourable terms"—soon to be most shamefully violated—"the three scourges, famine, plague and the sword," prevented the accomplishment of this pious project. For that once famous city was speedily depopulated: fully two thousand of its inhabitants—heretofore renowned at home and abroad, as the best and wealthiest merchants in the Kingdom, and equally for their refinement, hospitality, and generosity—having been sent to the Barbadoes to be sold there as slaves. Twice as many more died of the plague; numbers of others were hiding in hovels and among the hedges, or lying in the snow; while the Cromwellian soldiers plundered those many happy homes, once fit residences for princes and kings.

Unlike a number of the other Irish sea-port towns, Galway was never in possession of the Danes. In the course of time the Anglo-Normans did succeed in establishing themselves there; although Ware informs us that, with exception of Cogan and Sir John de Courcy, the Invaders failed to gain a foot-holding in Connaught before the end of the reign of King Henry the Second, so heroic was the prolonged resistance of the native chieftains west of the river Shannon.[19] But this devotion proved powerless in the end to hinder the immediate descendants of Hugh de Lacy seizing upon almost the entire Province; one of them being the ancestor of the Lynches, a family famous in the history of Galway. Still we are assured that "the strangers" failed to convert the ancient city into an "English town." As late as the year 1518, we find laws being framed to deter the inhabitants of Galway admitting into their houses anyone from the surrounding Irish Septs; so as to render it quite impossible for "an O,

[19] "Antiquities," p. 122. Haverty, pp. 225-232.

or a Mac" to enter the city. Neither might one become a "freeman of Galway" unless he could speak English; and consented "to have his upper lip shaved weekly" —under a penalty of twenty pounds sterling—as a sign of submission to "the foreigner's rule" (A.D. 1522). In this instance the piety of the Irish people acted as a most effective means for the preservation of their nationality; for nothing could prevent them making their annual pilgrimage to St. Brendan's Well near the Quay: with the result, that, of all the towns in Ireland, Galway alone can boast of a district in which the language and customs of the country have been jealously guarded down to the present day. And in far more important respects did the people resist the influences of their oppressors when certain apostate representatives of the Anglo-Norman adventurers endeavoured to rob them of their Faith in the time of Henry VIII. and of Queen Elizabeth. Ignorance was the method adopted to effect so grievous a wrong among the Catholics of Ireland, and the Galway schoolmasters, both clerical and lay, gained for themselves a glorious renown by their open defiance of those shameful Penal Laws, the ancient City of the Tribes being then known as "The Refuge of Irish Scholars." [20]

Besides the Norbertine foundations to which allusion has been made, other houses of the Order are said to have existed in Ireland, but the more reliable authorities do not mention them for want of satisfactory evidence. The White Canons were far more numerous in England, where they had at least thirty-five monasteries before the reign of King Henry the Eighth.[21] However, there was a wider field in the English rural districts for the exercise of the Apostolic zeal of these religious, who enjoyed the special privilege of being eligible to the charge

[20] "Monasticon Hibernicum," vol. ii., p. 208, (Note 14).
[21] "A Catholic Dictionary," 695 (note).

of parishes without requiring further Papal dispensation. Judging from the fact of their abbeys and priories being, for the most part, in remote places, it would seem that the Norbertines in Ireland advanced the interests of Religion by co-operating fervently in the revival of Monasticism in the Irish Church; practising in the seclusion of their cloisters a most rigid ascetic Rule. And for this very reason, perhaps, they became all the more endeared to a people who could well appreciate the important services thus rendered both to their country and to their Faith.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE KNIGHTS HOSPITALLER OF ST. JOHN.

OF the many Military Orders instituted in the Church from the beginning, that of the Knights Templar has, undoubtedly, the most interesting history. It was established early in the twelfth century (A.D. 1113) by nine French Knights for the defence of the newly founded Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem; receiving, in due course, all requisite Papal sanction. At the express wish of Baldwin II., king of Jerusalem, the first house of the Order was built close to the site of Solomon's Temple: whence the name assumed by those enrolling themselves in this noble cause of Christian chivalry. To the three vows of Religion, the Knights added that of perpetual warfare against the Infidels; and continued long to edify Christendom not alone by their heroic bravery in the field of battle, but, especially, by the fervent practice of the monastic virtues, leading a most austere mode of life. Eventually, various motives of expediency necessitated the formal suppression of this Order at the time of the Ecumenical Council of Vienne, held under Pope Clement V., A.D. 1311, when all the lands and other possessions of the Templars were confided, by the same Ecclesiastical authority, to the Knights Hospitaller of St. John. [1]

These Knights of St. John of Jerusalem were of a much earlier origin than the Templars, dating from about the middle of the eleventh century; although their Rule, based on the mode of life prescribed by St. Augustine

[1] Alemand, p. 123. "A Catholic Dictionary," p.790.

for those aspiring to perfection, was only confirmed canonically in the year 1120 by Pope Calixtus II. The pious founders of the Hospitallers were some merchants of Amalfi, who had opened an asylum in Jerusalem for poor pilgrims visiting the Holy Places. This humble service won the admiration of Duke Godfrey himself, and of many of the most noble among the Crusaders—particularly, because of the good done by those self-sacrificing men during the siege of Jerusalem. And soon "the Brothers of the Hospital of St. John Baptist" developed into a Congregation, comprising numerous communities, each zealous in the same grand work of Christian charity. After its formal recognition by the Church, the new Order had its members divided into Knights of noble birth, Chaplains, and Brothers-servants. The Knights Hospitaller were introduced into France as early as the year 1150; and there first became known as the Knights of St. Lazarus, so named after one of the principal Patrons of their Order. But from the year 1530, they were more generally called the Knights of Malta, having obtained possession of the Island of Malta from Charles V., retaining the same until it was surrendered to Napoleon, A.D. 1798.

A very interesting, yet little known phase of the history of the Knights Hospitaller was their incorporation with the Military Order instituted by Henry the Great in France. It was a noble attempt to revive that spirit of chivalry which had animated the first Crusaders, and which was crowned with a success that might have still persevered, but for the great social upheaval at the end of the eighteenth century. For, in establishing the "Order of the Knights of Our Lady of Carmel," it was the pious monarch's object to further, under Papal sanction, the cause of Religion by the defence and propagation of the true Faith; by the extirpation of heresy; and the conversion of unbelievers. The first Grand

Master of the Order was the Chevalier de Nerestang, who died, from wounds received in battle, in the year 1620; his remains being interred within the cloister of the Discalced Carmelite monastery at Lyons, which he himself had founded. This episode, in the later history of a Military Order so renowned at the time of the Crusades, is of special interest in connection with the monastic annals of Ireland; since the "White Friars of Carmel" came to this country at the very epoch the former glory of the Templars was about to be enhanced all the more by the fervent zeal of their successors, the Knights Hospitaller of St. John.[2]

The priory of KILMAINHAM,[3] County Dublin—so called from St. Magnend, who is said to have had an abbey there, A.D. 606—was the first foundation made for the Knights Templar in Ireland. The credit of the pious project is attributed to Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke—far better known as "Strongbow"—who seems to have been encouraged in the undertaking by King Henry II. (A.D. 1174). This was one of the noblest monastic buildings in Ireland, and most richly endowed by its numerous benefactors. The Prior was a Spiritual Peer of the Realm, the first to hold this office at Kilmainham being Hugh de Cloghall; one of his successors, after the monastery had passed into the possession of the Knights Hospitaller at the suppression of the Templars owing to the decision of the Council of Vienne, was a certain Walter de Aqua. From a record of the year 1274, it appears that the Knights of Kilmainham were compelled to take part in an expedition against the native Irish: many of the Templars were then slain in battle, the prior himself, William FitzRoger, being among the prisoners captured at Glenmalure, county Wicklow. This

[2] "*Annales des Carmes Déchaussés de France.*" (Laval: 1891), vol. I., pp. lv-vii.

[3] Ware, "Antiquities," p. 78. Walsh, p. 431, *sq.*

same prior played a prominent part in Irish politics for a number of years. In 1279 we find him refusing to obey Edward the First, who had commanded him to take up arms against the "mere Irish": he protested that the sword which he wore should not again be stained by Christian blood; knowing, moreover, that the King's foe in Ireland simply fought for land and home. So FitzRoger pleaded that his superior, Hugh Revell, had already summoned him to Palestine; and that he was bound by his vow to go. The King threatened to confiscate the priory of Kilmainham if his royal commands were not obeyed forthwith; and although the sequel is not told, we may infer how repugnant those expeditions against the native Irish were to the chivalrous Templars.

Year after year generous donations—chiefly of land—were bestowed on the priory of St. John the Baptist at Kilmainham. There can be no doubt that the pious benefactors held the members of this community in high esteem, notwithstanding the scandalous rumours about the Templars that were growing rife at the beginning of the fourteenth century. In most instances it was the intention of the charitable donors—as in the case of the lady Matilda de Lacy (A.D. 1301)—that these gifts should profit their own souls and the souls of their relatives and friends, living and dead. Indeed, so popular had this Military Order become in Ireland by the year 1307, that King Edward the Second, when commanding the seizure of the Knights Templar together with their possessions, found it necessary to get his plans executed suddenly and secretly, and before the knowledge of what had already been done in England could reach the Irish people generally. At this particular epoch the Templars are said to have had at least sixteen thousand flourishing establishments in various parts of the world; and to have been possessed of great wealth and power. In fact, their prosperity had begun to excite the envy and

dread of Philip the Fair, of France, who became most active in exaggerating such irregularities as may have existed in individual communities into gross charges against the entire Order; and, of course, had little difficulty in getting the Templars throughout his kingdom condemned by compliant judges—the possessions of the suppressed Knights being immediately seized by the Crown.

Edward II., of England, hoping to reap a like rich harvest of plunder, followed the French monarch's example; and here in Ireland the trial of the Templars took place at Dublin with great solemnity, their condemnation following, for motives of state policy, although the evidence proved them guiltless of the grievous crimes laid to their charge. Eventually, as we have seen, the dissolution of the entire order at the Council of Vienne was occasioned by the pressing exigencies of those times; and the Knights Hospitaller were commissioned to continue the work which it was no longer expedient for the Templars to do: a decision by no means grateful to those confident that the property of the suppressed Order would now become secularized. But the English king, among others, had to submit to this prudent course of the Council with a feigned good grace. And thus did the priory of Kilmainham come to be peopled by a community of the Knights Hospitaller of St. John of Jerusalem, with William de Ross as their first superior.

De Ross was succeeded by Roger Utlaugh, whose name frequently occurs in the records of this house from the year 1316. He was Lord Chancellor of Ireland in 1321, still retaining his office as prior of Kilmainham; and in 1332 he was appointed, by royal commission, to make overtures of peace to the heads of the Irish Septs still struggling to retain their lands and independence. It would seem that he was allowed to use his own

discretion with regard to the terms to be offered to those victims of Anglo-Norman aggression ; but we are not informed of the results of the good offices which he exercised on that occasion. Again, in the year 1338, we find the same prior undertaking to reward the piety and charity of a benefactor named Roger de Erykelot, with a share in all the prayers and good works of the members of the community at Kilmainham. Utlaugh died within two years, renowned for great virtue, but especially esteemed because of his zeal for the Order : always most earnest in guarding and advancing the interests of the priory under his immediate care during so long a term of office. The names of his successors down to the time of the suppression of the Irish monasteries have been preserved ; mention being made of a certain Gerald, son of Maurice, lord of Kerry, as the last Grand Master of the Knights Hospitaller in Ireland.

Sir John Rawson, an Englishman and favourite of King Henry VIII., was put in possession of Kilmainham, his apostacy being further rewarded when he was created Viscount Clontarf, receiving a rich annuity out of the plundered monastic estates. However, in the reign of Queen Mary (A.D. 1557) the lawful prior of Kilmainham —Sir Oswald Massingberd—was restored to his office and to the possessions of that monastery ; this act of justice being effected by the Papal legate, Cardinal Pole, whose venerable mother—Margaret, Countess of Salisbury—had been put to death at the command of King Henry the Eighth. When Queen Elizabeth came into power, Massingberd—as an upholder of orthodoxy—had to flee the kingdom ; and Kilmainham fell once more into the hands of the royal spoilers, the Queen's favourites in the ancient town of Athenry coming in for a share of the sacrilegious plunder.[4] It is said that the fine East

[4] Archdall, pp. 221-250. Lewis, vol. ii., p. 169.

window in the chapel of the military hospital at Kilmainham—established, under the auspices of the Duke of Ormonde for invalid soldiers, A.D. 1680—belonged originally to the church built there by the Knights Templar.

Not far from the scene of Brian Boroimhe's glorious victory over the Danes at CLONTARF [5] there was a commandery of the Knights Templar, which must certainly have been founded before the year 1185; and which, according to some writers, seems to have been endowed by King Henry II. soon after the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland. As this monarch and Strongbow—perhaps the most ruthless of his mercenary followers—are now to appear before us in the character of benefactors of various Irish monastic institutions, it will be necessary to dwell here briefly on the nature of their expedition to this country, and on the causes that led to its ultimate success from their point of view. [6]

When Dermot MacMurrough, a king of Leinster of very scandalous fame, fled from Ireland to escape the vengeance of Tiernan O'Rourke of Breffny for the abduction of Dervorgil (Dearbhforgaill)—that Prince's wife—King Henry was in Aquitaine striving to curb the growing power of the nobles there; while at home in England his tyranny was being heroically resisted by St. Thomas a Becket (A.D. 1166). Hence, he was unable to afford personal aid to MacMurrough, who had appealed to him against the Irish Princes, at length determined to check the King of Leinster's career of crime; but unhappy dissensions led eventually to the ruin of those chieftains themselves, and to the nation's misery. As King Henry was quite willing to allow anyone to undertake the expedition to Ireland in his name, MacMurrough next sought the assistance of Strongbow—a mere soldier of fortune, whose skill with

[5] Ware's "Antiquities," p. 77. [6] Haverty, pp. 181, *sq.*

the formidable weapon most in vogue at the time gained for him this surname—a man of much bravery, undoubtedly, although dead to all sense of justice or mercy, should the exercise of either virtue imply the slightest restraint on his avarice and ambition. Being, it seems, in almost desperate financial circumstances, Strongbow eagerly complied with MacMurrough's wishes, and, joined by a number of other knights of equally precarious fortune, led a band of mercenary Anglo-Norman soldiers into Ireland. Conspicuous among these adventurers were two sons of the profligate Nessa, with many of their kinsmen, all thoroughly imbued with the vices common to mercenaries of that age: their advent to Ireland was, accordingly, signalized by countless deeds of violence and sacrilege. Nevertheless, many of them were evidently seized with remorse later on; and either they themselves, or their immediate descendants—in a spirit of sincere atonement, it is to be hoped—rendered great service both to the Church and country by the establishment of not a few of our ancient Irish monasteries. Furthermore, numbers of the children of the Anglo-Norman invaders devoted their lives to God's service in those homes of penance and prayer, being thus the first of their race to become, under the influences of Religion, "more Irish than the Irish themselves" in feeling and sympathy; and this notwithstanding the odious laws which, subsequently, would raise—even in the cloister—a barrier between them and the children of those whom their forefathers had wronged so grievously.

In order to insure for himself the lion's share of the rich plunder which he and his companions had come over to seize, Strongbow espoused MacMurrough's daughter, Eva; causing himself to be proclaimed king of Leinster after his father-in-law's death in the year 1171. Indeed, his power had so increased as to rouse the suspicions of his royal master, whom he hastened to appease

by repairing in person to England. The King then led a large army into Ireland, taking back with him Strongbow and other knights. One of the reasons assigned for this step was that he might thus distract attention from his own guilty part in the murder of St. Thomas a Becket. From the very beginning, Henry's policy towards the Irish was one of guile and hypocrisy. He protested that he had merely come to protect them from the rapaciousness of his English subjects, invading the country against his royal will. Still, we find him confirming those selfsame plunderers in possession of the lands which they had seized ; even were we to forget how readily he had yielded to the wishes of the perfidious MacMurrough. He now actually granted the city of Dublin to the burghers of Bristol—requiring, however, that his own suzerainty should be acknowledged according to the usual conditions of the feudal system, which the Anglo-Normans were then trying to introduce into Ireland. To crown his duplicity, Henry pretended to take a keen interest in the reform of the Irish Church, with the result, as a contemporary English writer assures us, that "the miserable clergy were reduced to beggary in the Island," and that the very cathedrals were sacrilegiously despoiled. (A.D. 1172.)

The Irish Princes began at length to realise the nature of Henry's designs. They strove to regain possession of their lands and to drive the strangers from the country by force of arms. And so difficult did they make it for the invaders to guard the spoils of all those plundered homes, that, even at the time of Strongbow's death (A.D. 1176), the Anglo-Normans feared lest his loss should cause a panic among the adventurers generally ; for he had always been regarded as their leader, although the fame which he had acquired among them was not, by all accounts, merited by those qualities of mind characteristic of a truly great man. However, Strongbow must

have died sincerely repentant, at all events; we are told that St. Laurence O'Toole himself was present at his obsequies in the cathedral now known as Christ's Church, wherein his tomb may still be seen. Perhaps the one great action of his life was the founding of that house for Knights Templar at Kilmainham, with which his name is connected, and which took place only a short time before his death; his own martial ardour influencing him, probably, in his choice of a Military Order, especially as the Knights Templar had by that time gained so high a renown for themselves, owing to their heroic devotedness in the exercise of their noble calling in the East.

Besides those two establishments in the County Dublin, the Knights Templar had various other foundations in Leinster, several dating from the twelfth century. The lady Matilda de Lacy built a commandery for them at a place called KILLSARAN,[7] county Louth. In the year 1329, we find the superior of this house also governing a preceptory at KILMAINHAMBEG,[8] county Meath, endowed by Walter de Lacy during the reign of King Richard the First. The preceptory of KILMAINHAM-WOOD,[9] also in the county Meath, was established by the Preston family sometime in the thirteenth century. In the county Kildare there were commanderies at KILLIBEGS,[10] KILLHILL,[11] and TULLY,[12] all founded during the thirteenth century, probably; but nothing further is known concerning them, with exception of Killhill, which was endowed by Maurice FitzGerald.

There was a preceptory for Knights Templar at KILBARRY,[13] county Waterford, which seems to have been of considerable importance, judging from the fragment of its history that has come down to us. It was built in

[7] Alemand, p. 126. [8-12] Walsh, pp. 602, 482, 488, 491.
[13] Archdall, p. 689—"Ware's Bishops" (Harris), p. 531. *Note.*—The names of places throughout are written, for the most part, as given by Walsh, "History of the Irish Hierarchy," etc. (New York, A.D. 1855).

the course of the twelfth century; a few ruins still remain affording, however, but a poor idea of the grandeur of the original church and monastery. Eventually, it passed into the hands of the Knights Hospitaller, one of whom—Stephen de Fulburn—was consecrated Bishop of Waterford in the year 1273. This prelate became Treasurer of Ireland later on, and afterwards Lord Chief Justice, when he introduced certain changes in the coinage then current in the kingdom. Finally, he was translated to the archbishopric of Tuam (A.D. 1286), which he governed for only two years, dying in Dublin, A.D. 1288. His successor in the bishopric of Waterford was his brother Walter, a Franciscan Friar: the first of his Order in Ireland to be raised to that See. William de Fynchin, who, from the year 1327, was superior of Kilbarry for a lengthy period, is spoken of as a most highly esteemed member of that community. One of his successors was Richard Walsh—slain in battle, together with the Mayor of Waterford, by the O'Driscolls in the year 1368. The preceptory of KILLURE,[14] also in the county Waterford, probably dated from about the same epoch; it was granted by Queen Elizabeth to a man named Nicholas Aylmer, who, in acknowledgment of the favour, paid an annual rent to the Crown. In this county, too, was the preceptory of CROOKE,[15] which, somefime during the thirteenth century, owed its origin to the Baron of Curraghmore; and which, together with those of Kilbarry and Killure, we find provided for by the Grand-master of the Hospitallers at Kilmainham, A.D. 1348. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth the buildings and lands of Crooke were rented by a certain Antony Power; and in the time of Charles I. (1638), they were granted to Sir Peter Alyard. This monastery was used for some time as a stronghold by the Baron of Curragh-

[14] Walsh, p. 683.

[15] Ibidem, p. 681. This writer does not furnish references; but he relies, to a considerable extent, upon the authority of Archdall.

more, from whom the Knights of St. John received it, remaining in possession until the sixteenth century. Two other commanderies were established in the county Waterford at KILLUNKART [16] and RHINCREW,[17] the latter being granted to Sir Walter Raleigh at the Suppression.

The preceptory of MOURNE,[18] county Cork, was endowed by Alexander de Sancta Helena during the reign of King John. An area of many acres was enclosed by the walls of this foundation ; strong castles defending it at different points, one having been built by John FitzRichard while in charge there, and at the instance of the Grand Master of the Order from Kilmainham. Extensive ruins of this preceptory, including the church, still remain ; close by stands the tower of an ancient castle erected by the Barretts, once lords of that territory. The buildings and lands were all given to Cormac MacTeige MacCarthy at the dissolution of the Irish monasteries. In the year 1571, a great battle was fought between a member of the same family—Cormac Oge MacCarthy—and James, Earl of Ormonde, in which the latter met with a very signal defeat, losing over a thousand men, while two of his own brothers were among the prisoners. Mourne was formerly a corporate and walled town ; but it was totally destroyed during the reign of King Edward IV. by Murrough O'Brien, then at war with the English.

In the county Tipperary, the Knights Templar had a preceptory at CLONAUL, [19] established sometime in the thirteenth century. Giles de Rous—who succeeded William de Hereford—was for many years superior there. The preceptory of TEMPLE-HOUSE,[20] on the river Owenmore, Co. Sligo, dated from the reign of King Henry the Third. That of KILLARGE, [21] in the county Carlow, owed its origin to Gilbert de Borard in the time of King John, and was dedicated to Our Lord's holy Precursor ; in the same county there was another preceptory at

[16] [17] Archdall, pp. 689-698. [18] Ibidem, p. 75. Lewis, vol. ii., p. 397.

BALLYMOON,[22] founded about the year 1300, but of which nothing further is known. We find, however, that in the year 1590 the lands and other property of Killarge were bestowed on Mary, wife of Gerald Aylmer, who had secured the good will of Queen Elizabeth.

Prior to the suppression of the Knights Templar at the Council of Vienne, the Grand Commandery of the Order in Ireland was at WEXFORD.[23] Founded by William Mareschal, Earl of Pembroke, this monastery was dedicated to Saints John and Brigid. It appears that the Franciscans obtained possession of the church and monastic buildings on their coming to Wexford, A.D. 1380. For the Knights Hospitaller no longer required the Wexford establishment, having made Kilmainham the headquarters of their Order in Ireland on being appointed to continue the various good works hitherto performed by the Templars. The preceptory of KILLCLOGHAN,[24] county Wexford, was endowed by the O'Moore; it passed into the hands of a Sir Henry Harrington in the time of Queen Elizabeth; he was merely asked to pay a nominal yearly rent for about five hundred acres of "the abbey lands." Subject to Killicloghan was the preceptory of BALLYHACK,[25] also established in the county Wexford during the twelfth century. When superior of this house, A.D. 1375, John FitzGerald was appointed one of the "keepers of the peace" for the same county.

Of the other foundations of this Order in Ireland—the very names of several, undoubtedly, being now lost—mention may be made of the preceptory which Hugh de Lacy built at CASTLEBUOY,[26] or ST. JOHNSTOWN in the year 1189. It was situated in one of the most fertile vales of the barony of Ardes, county Down, a few miles north-east of Portaferry. Dependent on Kilmainham, we are told that this house was still in a very

[19-22] Walsh, pp, 665, 656, 366.

[22 24] Ibidem, pp. 712, 708. [25 26] Walsh, pp. 701, 411.

flourishing state at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The ruined remains of the lofty tower of the ancient church marks the site of the original foundation. Only passing allusion is made to the preceptory of St. John Baptist, which Godfrey de Mariscis endowed at ANY,[27] county Limerick, in the thirteenth century. No reliable information is to be had concerning a foundation of the same Order "beyond the East Gate of the city of GALWAY"; [28] it is quite certain, however, that the preceptory of KINALEKIN, [29] in the county Galway, dated from the thirteenth century, having the O'Flaherty, Dynast of Iar-Connaught, as its founder and being under the invocation of St. John the Baptist. A religious known as "the Knight John" was prior of this monastery in the year 1310; his two immediate successors bore the same name. One of the latter had been unlawfully deprived of some landed property; but it was eventually restored to the preceptory.

We find frequent reference to the services rendered to the Irish Church by the Knights Hospitaller of St. John. And, indeed, their predecessors, the Templars, were equally zealous in the object of their holy vocation for many a generation after their first coming to Ireland—substituting works of charity among the poor for those deeds of Christian valour which had made their name so famous in far Eastern lands. [30]

[27] Alemand, p. 128. [28] [29] Walsh, pp. 458, 466.

[30] NOTE.—Passing reference is also made to the following foundations said to have been in charge of the Templars, or of their successors, the Knights Hospitaller: that of ST. SEPULCHRE in the city of Dublin; the preceptory of BEAMORE, county Meath; that of DUNDRUM, county Down; that of BALLIVONY, county Waterford; a preceptory in CORK city; and two other foundations in the county Limerick, one at CARIGOGONILL and one at KILLTEEL. With regard to the ancient institutions in the city of Dublin alluded to as the "Hospital of St. Stephen," "Styne Hospital," and "Allen's Hospital"—the two first dating from as early as the thirteenth century, probably, the latter from the year 1504—there is no evidence to associate them with the Knights Hospitaller; but, whatever the history of these establishments, they were certainly founded in the cause of Christian charity.—Walsh, pp. 390-680.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ORDER OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

It was the thought of the hardships endured by Christian captives in the power of the infidels that inspired two holy men—St. John of Matha, a native of Provence, and the zealous hermit, Felix of Valois—to institute this Order in honour of the Blessed Trinity. Their followers were bound to devote their lives to the grand purpose of succouring the victims of Mahomedan oppression. Pope Innocent III. (A.D. 1198) gave his sanction and blessing to the enterprise, approving the Rule of life adopted by the pious founders, which was merely a modification of that drawn from the writings of St. Augustine, with such special statutes as the vocation of the Trinitarians called forth. Cerfroy, in France, was the cradle of the new Order.[1] The habit consisted of a white soutane and scapulary, a red and blue cross being borne on the right breast; so that these religious were also called "Red Friars" and (here in Ireland especially) "Crouched Friars" or "Cross-Bearers." They were, likewise, known as the "Maturin Fathers"; probably because the most important house of the Order was near the church of St. Maturin in Paris. Certain authors,[2] however, would have us understand that the Irish Cross-Bearers were quite distinct from the Trinitarians, who, according to these writers, had but one monastery—that of Adare—in Ireland. But the Annalists generally do not favour this opinion. St. John de Matha died in the year 1213;

[1] *Histoire du Clergé*, Vol. I, pp. 306-311. [2] Alemand, pp. 137-145.

and to his ardent zeal may be attributed the redemption of over thirty thousand captives which his disciples are said to have effected in the course of time. The scope of the Trinitarian's vocation extended, moreover, to the service of helping the poor and afflicted: in this respect chiefly the Cross-Bearers exercised their holy calling in Ireland.

Even before the death of their saintly founder we find them established in the city of DUBLIN,[8] Ailred de Palmer having opened an hospital for them here, placing it under the protection of St. John Baptist, and becoming prior of the same himself eventually. This was towards the end of the twelfth century, when John Comyn governed the Archdiocese of Dublin, the first Englishman appointed to that See. He seems to have taken a deep interest in the new Order; while his successor (A.D. 1216) became still more intimately connected with the Trinitarians of St. John's. In the following century one of the priors of this monastery held the office of Lord Chancellor of Ireland. From the beginning, as many as a hundred and fifty of the poor and infirm were cared for by the Cross-Bearers of Dublin, the Hospital being in a most flourishing condition during the reign of King Edward the Third. But this great work of charity ceased after the priory, with all its possessions, had been granted to Maurice, Earl of Thomond, in the time of king Henry the Eighth.

It may here be said that that monarch had a special motive for his hatred of the Trinitarians of Dublin. A Chapter of the Irish Province had been convened in the monastery of St. John on the King's infamous policy becoming known to the Fathers. And it was there decided what steps should be taken by the religious in the cause of Truth. Superiors and subjects were alike resolved to reject the shocking proposals made to them by the agents of the royal heresiarch; well aware that

[8] Archdall, p. 199-205. Alemand, p. 138.

in doing so they forfeited their lives, like many of their brethren in other parts of the country; but they had absolute confidence in the protection of the Most Holy Trinity. They now drew up a formulary of Catholic doctrine of which each made profession; and actually had copies of this document posted throughout the city, together with an urgent appeal to the Faithful—imploring them to persevere fearlessly to the end (no matter at what sacrifice) in their loyalty to the Church.[4] Hastening from place to place, the Provincial himself and Father Theobald, the ex-Provincial, warned the people against the certain perils to be incurred by yielding to the King's menaces. So enraged were the royal agents at this heroic conduct that they instantly slew Father Theobald; and then seizing the Provincial dragged him before an unscrupulous judge, who at once condemned him to a cruel death. A raid was then made on the Trinitarian monastery—said to have occupied the site in Thomas Street upon which the Augustinian church now stands—and the other members of the Dublin community, without exception, also died for the Faith during the month of February in the year 1539.[5]

Some time in the reign of King Richard the First, a priory and hospital were endowed for the same Order at KELLS,[6] county Meath, by Walter de Lacy, and dedicated to St. John. The founder secured a Charter for the people of Kells, granting them privileges similar to those enjoyed by the inhabitants of Bristol; a favour confirmed by King Richard II., A.D. 1388. But from the time of the Suppression, Kells began to lose its importance as a borough town of Meath. A cemetery is still pointed out there as the probable site of the Trinitarian monastery.[7] The priory of DUNDALK,[8] county Louth, dated from about the same period. It was built by "a noble

[4] "Our Martyrs," p. 85. [5] Ibidem, p. 86. [6] Walsh, p. 601.
[7] Lewis, vol. ii., p. 36. [8] Walsh, p. 546.

MELLIFONT ABBEY. (p. 127.)

citizen" named Bertram de Verdon, who placed it under the protection of St. Leonard. A primate of Armagh, Patrick O'Scanlin, died there in the year 1270, but his remains were interred in the Dominican friary at Drogheda. Great numbers of the poor and suffering found relief in the hospital of the Trinitarians of Dundalk; especially when the town was occupied by Robert Bruce, between whose followers and the English many a battle was fought close to the walls of this monastery. But now not even the ruins of that once most important institution remains, the lands and buildings having been granted to a man named Henry Drayton by Queen Elizabeth.

Like most of the Trinitarian foundations of the Irish Province, that of DOWN,[9] was dedicated to St. John Baptist. Sir John de Courcy was its principal benefactor, and it was called "the priory of the English" to distinguish it from the monastery which the Canons Regular had in the same place—usually alluded to as "the priory of the Irish." The house which the Cross-Bearers had at KILKENNY-WEST,[10] county Westmeath, also dated from the twelfth century, having the Baptist as its Patron. Although its origin is traced to the Tyrell family, a certain priest named Thomas, the grandson of Sir Thomas Dillon, is occasionally mentioned as its founder; it was granted to Robert Dillon at the Suppression. Not far from this monastery there seems to have been an hospital subject to the grand priory of Kilmainham (A.D. 1335).

According to Ware, the Trinitarians had three foundations at DROGHEDA,[11] partly in Meath, partly in the county Louth. That of "St. Mary de Urso," beyond the West Gate, was built by Ursus de Samuel, probably in the year 1206, as a place of refuge for the poor and suffering; the Superior was called "guardian" not prior.

[9] Walsh, p. 697.

[10] Archdall, p. 720.

[11] "Antiquities," p. 90.

the more usual title. The priory of St. Laurence was founded by the Mayor and citizens for the same charitable purpose ; and the priory of St. John Baptist was endowed by Walter de Lacy during the reign of King John. Another priory, dedicated to the Baptist, was situated at NEWTON,[12] county Meath, to which the Bishops of the diocese proved generous benefactors from the time of its foundation in the thirteenth century.

The Irish Cross-Bearers had also an important house of their Order at ARDEE,[13] county Louth. It was endowed by Roger de Pippard, moved to undertake this good work " for the health of his own soul, and for the souls of his wife, Alicia ; William, his father ; Joan, his mother, and his brothers, Gilbert and Peter (A.D. 1207)." All grants made to this community—together with the privilege of electing their own prior—were confirmed by Eugene MacGillevider, Archbishop of Armagh : a most virtuous Prelate who had been appointed to the Primatial See by Papal authority in the year 1202 ; but to whose election King John was bitterly opposed, wishing to advance a favourite of his own. The Archbishop Eugene, however, was at length enabled to take possession of his See ; and died in Rome, A.D. 1215, whither he had been summoned to assist at the Lateran Council.[14] Shortly before the Suppression of the Irish monasteries (A.D. 1538), the town of Ardee was burned down by " O'Nial " and his followers, then struggling to redress their own and their country's wrongs. The property of the Trinitarian priory was finally handed over to an apostate, who had obtained favour before the English Court by his crime. In later times the ancient monastic church was converted into a place of worship for the heretics who had settled at Ardee.

Like so many cities and towns throughout Europe,

[12] Archdall. p. 565. [13] Ibidem, p. 445.
[14] " Ware's Bishops " (Harris), p. 62.

ATHY,[15] Co. Kildare, is said to owe its origin to the religious institutions founded there. And in the year 1253, we find Richard de St. Michael, lord of Rheban, selecting a site on the West bank of the river Barrow for a monastery which he endowed for the Trinitarians, in honour of St. Thomas. But this community was frequently subjected to numerous inconveniences arising from the wars waged against the English settlers of Athy by the Irish clans—especially by the O'Kellys, who lost no opportunity of harassing the invaders of their patrimony. The town was destroyed by fire in the year 1308; and in 1315 it was pillaged by the soldiers of Robert Bruce. In 1325 the O'Moore succeeded in wresting a considerable portion of that territory from the English, and occupied the great castle built by Lord Rheban, of which some massive and picturesque ruins still remain; but there is no trace of the ancient monastery.[16] During the reign of King John, Walter de Riddlesford built another priory and hospital for the Cross-Bearers in the same county at CASTLEDERMOT,[17] of which town he was lord. A knight named Sir Henry Harrington secured for himself the lands attached to this foundation after the friars had been driven forth at the Suppression; a solitary ruined tower being all that is left of the original monastic buildings. It seems that de Riddlesford raised a great fortress, also, at Castledermot; for the O'Tooles were very powerful in this district, and would not suffer themselves to be victimized with impunity by the Anglo-Norman adventurers.

Bare mention is made of a Trinitarian priory said to have been established at RANDOWN,[18] in the county Roscommon, at the express command of King John; of which Philip Nangle was a very generous benefactor during the reign of Henry the Third. We find passing

[15] Archdall, p. 308. [16] Lewis, vol. i., p. 91. [17] Archdall, p. 310.
[18-20] Walsh, pp. 633, 390, 658.

allusion, also, to foundations of the same Order at CORK,[19] CASHEL,[20] and GALWAY[21]; while the Minorite friary built by Sir John Devereux at Ross,[22] county Wexford, is supposed to have replaced an establishment of the Cross-Bearers, which had existed there previously. Besides these, there were, probably, other houses of the Order in Ireland which cannot now be identified: indeed owing to the similarity of the duties discharged by the Trinitarians and the Knights Hospitaller all over the country, some writers have been led into the mistake of attributing the monasteries of the former to the latter religious.[23] But notwithstanding the frequent very unsatisfactory nature of the information at our disposal, we have ample evidence to show how the members of each particular Order helped to further by their zeal Ireland's claim to be recognised as "A Second Thebaid."

Although certain authors speak of a Trinitarian monastery in LIMERICK,[24] as distinct from that of ADARE,[25] the more general opinion is that the latter was the only foundation made for the Order in this county and that, probably, the Augustinian friary of Holy Cross in the City of Limerick may account for the error of those writers. Some say that the monastery at Adare was the first house established for the Cross-Bearers in Ireland. The members of this community had from the beginning a wide field for the exercise of their charity and zeal; seeing how the native Irish had not yet recovered, by any means, from the Anglo-Norman invasion of Munster. Raymond le Gros was leader in that expedition of plunder—a most popular Knight among his fellow adventurers, owing to his eagerness to rob and oppress the Irish.[26] So great was his influence over the mercenary soldiers under his command,

[21] [23] Alemand, pp. 142, 138, 145.
[24] [25] "Our Martyrs," p. 86. Walsh, p. 521. [26] *Haverty*, p. 219.

that even Strongbow himself had often to submit to his dictation; for those ruthless plunderers declared openly that they would obey no leader except le Gros. Such devotedness was repaid on his part by affording them frequent opportunity of pillage in the south of Ireland. Meanwhile, Raymond's own personal enemies - growing daily more alarmed at the extent of his power— spared no effort to put an end, tragic if needs be, to what they regarded as an over-successful career. But he could defy them from the security of his position in the city of Limerick, which he had seized, and where he resided until the death of Strongbow in the year 1176, an event occasioning, as we have seen, quite a crisis in the affairs of the principal Invaders. Le Gros then hastened to Dublin, having certain interests of his own to forward there. No sooner had he left Limerick than Donnell O'Brien, king of Thomond, entered and set fire to the city lest it should ever again fall into the hands of those cruel foreign spoilers. Later on, however, Henry II. made a new grant of the kingdom of Limerick to another Anglo-Norman knight, named Philip de Braosa. But on the approach of this brave, if fierce warrior, towards the ancient capital of the South, the people themselves burned down the city—so great was their horror of such lawless mercenaries; still their heroic valour on that occasion inspired de Braosa with an awe which prevented him thenceforth ever daring to meet the native Irish on the field of battle. Other adventurers were found only too eager to try every means to secure for themselves the rich lands of the South; shielding their revolting excesses under sanction of the royal commission which they had so easily obtained.

Little is known of the Trinitarian monastery of Adare beyond the fact of its having been generously endowed in the year 1279 by John, Earl of Kildare; and that it was eventually granted to Sir Henry Wallop, one

of Queen Elizabeth's favourites.[27] The ruins of both church and friary still remain, comprising a well preserved massive tower, the nave, and part of the choir, which the Earl of Dunraven had restored in the year 1811 as a place of Catholic worship; these, and portions of the various monastic offices, opening off the cloister—all in the style of early English architecture.[28]

Father Robert was "Minister" of the monastery of Adare in the year 1539; and on being informed of the royal decree, enjoining conformity to the new religion of the State, he boldly declared that the King was a heretic, and that he himself would rather die than yield to so impious a command. The other members of the same community—there were usually forty-six religious at Adare—proclaimed their readiness to follow Father Robert's heroic example, quite willing to lay down their lives in the glorious cause of Truth. Hence, in order to be prepared against the time of their approaching certain doom, they first hid away the sacred vessels and ornaments, well knowing the rapacity of the heretical soldiery; and then they distributed whatever food and clothing the monastery contained among the poor of the neighbourhood. Hardly had these precautions been taken, and before the friars themselves could make good their escape, when the house and church were invaded by the armed agents of the King. It was fondly thought by the leaders that if Father Robert could be won over to the royal cause, his apostacy would hinder all opposition on the part of his brethren; and great rewards were held out to him to influence his decision. But he scornfully rejected such bribes, declaring that the Pope alone was Christ's Vicar upon earth and the only Head of His Church, of which King Henry VIII. had now ceased to be a member. Enraged by such a grand profession of Faith, the heretics instantly slew the intrepid

[27] "State Papers" (Brady), pp. 56-105. [28] Lewis, vol. i. p. 8.

Confessor; while the other members of the community were, as the chronicle relates, "some hanged in the market-place; some murdered secretly; and many died of the harsh treatment which they received in the prisons where they had been held by their persecutors."

It is probable that the priory of Adare was the home of the holy Cornelius O'Neil before his elevation to the Episcopate, and appointment to the See of Limerick. This heroic Prelate's name does not occur in Ware's incomplete list of the Bishops of Ireland.[29] We are assured that it was the fame of his sanctity and learning which had caused Henry VIII. to be so anxious to obtain a favourable opinion from him on the question of that monarch's divorce from Queen Catherine. But nothing could induce the Bishop to act against his conscience; he protested that the King's marriage with the unhappy Queen was valid and lawful, fully aware that he gave this just testimony at the peril of his life. The zealous Prelate immediately summoned a meeting of the members of various religious Orders, in or near Limerick, together with all the secular priests, to warn them that they might be called upon now at any moment to shed their blood for the Faith. Indeed, he himself was seized while exhorting his people to be on their guard against the false doctrine which the King's agents were trying to propagate; and he was slain without pity, because found determined to persevere in his firm purpose of upholding the Catholic Truth. Many other religious were put to death on the same occasion—the 25th of June, A.D. 1539. About this time, also, and for a like holy cause, the Trinitarians of Cork, Kilkenny, Ross, Dundalk, Galway, and Cashel were captured and condemned; such being the number then put to death that the Annalists sadly record the fact of the absolute disappearance of the Irish Cross-Bearers during that eventful period.[30]

[29] Ware's Bishops (Harris), p. 523. [30] "Our Martyrs," pp. 83-89.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE BENEDICTINES.

THE Founder of this great Order is the recognised Patriarch of the Religious life in the West, although Monasticism in its strictest sense was, as we have seen, known and fervently practised in Ireland nearly two centuries before the time of Saint Benedict. Subiaco was the first retreat chosen by the Saint, and there he began the great work which he had been inspired to undertake; but circumstances arose which caused him to change to Monte Cassino in the year 529. He drew up a Rule of life for his disciples which was a very marvel of wisdom, adapted to the exigencies of all classes and of every age, so that no one might be denied admission to the Order if called to embrace the monastic state. Even children were to be received, should their parents or guardians present them to the Abbot to be trained as the Rule prescribed, precise instructions being laid down therein to direct each monk, young or old, how to apply himself daily to the duty of study, manual labour, and prayer. And not alone did those who had adopted this mode of life succeed in sanctifying themselves—they helped, moreover, to forward in a marvellous way the loftiest ideals of civilization, which can make no real progress except under the influences exercised by Religion. For it is well known that whatever is best in modern Art and Science can be traced back to the time when the monasteries of the various Orders were the only schools.[1]

[1] "The Monks of the West," vol. ii., book iv., pp. 39-68.

As for the glory which the spiritual sons of St. Benedict have achieved in the Church, we need merely say that early in the fourteenth century there had already been as many as twenty-four Benedictine Popes, two hundred Cardinals, seven thousand Archbishops, fifteen thousand Bishops, and still a far greater number of Benedictine Saints. Relaxation of monastic discipline was to be expected in the Order in the course of the ages; but, invariably, a revival of primitive fervour followed: perhaps in the establishment of a new Congregation, such as that of Saint Maur (A.D. 1618), which has proved but an added glory to St. Benedict's zeal, placing the world under a lasting debt of gratitude by reason of the stupendous labours of its members in every branch of learning. Seeing what share the Benedictines, with St. Austin as their leader, had in the conversion of England, we are prepared to find the Order flourishing in that country at a very early date (A.D. 596). No less than one hundred and eighty-six Benedictine abbeys, priories, and nunneries, with, probably, a hundred other dependent establishments were plundered at the suppression of the English monasteries.[2]

The first mention of the Benedictines in Ireland is a reference to their introduction into the ancient abbey of DOWNPATRICK,[3] county Down, to replace the Secular Canons who had hitherto been in charge (A.D. 1183). Sir John de Courcy was the principal benefactor of this community, sent over from the monastery of the Order at Chester. The prior enjoyed the privilege of sitting in Parliament as a Baron. Two years after the coming of these monks—A.D. 1185—the bodies of St. Patrick, St. Columba, and St. Brigid were discovered in the church of Down abbey at the prayer of the holy Bishop Malachy,

[2] "*Histoire du Clergé*," vol. ii., p. 164, *sq.* "A Catholic Dictionary," p. 75.

[3] Archdall, pp. 114-117.

the third distinguished Irish prelate of that name. The solemn translation of the sacred Relics took place the following year, Pope Urban III. sending a special legate, Cardinal Vivian, to assist at this sacred function. Part of the abbey was destroyed by an earthquake in 1245 ; and the community there suffered much in the year 1316 at the hands of the Scotch troops under Edward Bruce; but the damage done to the buildings on both these occasions was speedily repaired. We are told that the superiors of the different monastic institutions in this district strenuously resisted the action of Henry VIII. at the time of the Suppression. Lord Grey had been sent by the King to enforce the royal decrees ; and one of his infamous deeds was to deface the tombs of the three Patron Saints in the Benedictine abbey of Down, a sacrilege cited against him three years later in the very impeachment that led to his own execution. Gerald, eleventh Earl of Kildare, received a grant of Down abbey, A.D. 1539.

The Sir John de Courcy here alluded to was one of the chief assistants appointed by Henry II. to support William FitzAdelm in his office as Viceroy of Ireland after the death of Strongbow. He was a man of great strength and daring, besides being one of the most enterprising of the Anglo-Norman adventurers, and was determined to provide well for himself out of the lands which his royal master had so unjustly seized throughout Ireland. De Courcy, accordingly, claimed the entire of Ulster as his share of the plunder ; and, notwithstanding the Viceroy's protest, marched on Down at the head of a band of fierce mercenary followers upon whose devotedness he could rely. Cardinal Vivian happened to be there at the time. No sooner did the Legate witness the atrocities perpetrated by the English under De Courcy than he urged the Irish prince Dunlevy to resist those ferocious invaders by every means in his power. A gallant

attempt was made in response to that call ; but, at first, the efforts of the Irish were all in vain. Later on, however, (A.D. 1178) De Courcy met with some serious reverses ; and before the close of his eventful career, we find him imploring the aid of the native chieftains against his own countrymen who were bent upon his ruin—A.D. 1204. In the meantime he had endowed several monasteries in the north of Ireland, hoping thus to expiate in some measure for his many crimes of sacrilegious plunder : his generosity towards the monks of Downpatrick being most frequently quoted in evidence of his remorse. Quite a number of these religious were called in the course of time to govern the diocese of Down.[4]

The Benedictine monastery of ARDES[5] in the same county—known as the "Black Abbey of St. Andrew," the site of which lies about two miles north of the village of Ballyhalbert, on the road from Portaferry to Donaghadee—is said to have owed its origin to Sir John de Courcy (A.D. 1180). Eventually (A.D. 1218), Hugh de Lacy made this house subject to the priory of St. Mary at Lomlay in Normandy. Although Down Abbey is usually alluded to as the first of the Irish foundations, still we are told that a king of Ulster, named Magnell Makenlefe, built an abbey for the Benedictines at ERYNACH-CARRIG,[6] county Down, as early as the year 1126, undertaking this work of piety in honour of Our Blessed Lady. Evodius, the first abbot, is said to have predicted the destruction of this monastery, an event which was sadly verified after De Courcy had invaded Ulster. But, in atonement for that deed, the Knight afterwards endowed an abbey for Cistercians at Iniscourcy, handing over to the community there what remained of the monastic property of Erynach-Carrig. Having already bestowed the greater part of the largest

[4] Ware's Bishops (Harris), p. 196 *sq.*
[5] Ware's "Antiquities," p. 93. [6] Archdall, p. 120.

of the islands off the coast of Down on the monastery of St. Mary, at York, and equally on that of St. Bega at Coupland, De Courcy brought over monks from both these abbeys to form a community for the priory which he founded for the Benedictines at NEDDRUM,[7] in the year 1183. But this monastery had ceased to exist even before the time of the general Suppression. It is interesting to note that a Franciscan Bishop, named Edmund de Courcy, governed the diocese of Clogher towards the end of the fifteenth century; and that he was succeeded by Nehemy Clonin, a Benedictine, who resigned, A.D. 1503. Various other Sees in the North of Ireland, besides that of Down, were committed to the charge of the zealous sons of St. Benedict.[8]

In the county Tipperary, there was a Benedictine abbey at KILCOMIN,[9] built by Philip de Worcester, chief governor of Ireland about the year 1184, and dedicated to Saints Philip, James and Comin. The first community was supplied by the abbey of Glastonbury in Somersetshire, upon which, accordingly, Kilcomin became dependent. In 1185, John, Earl of Morton, is said to have established the Benedictine priory of St. John the Evangelist in the city of WATERFORD,[10] which, although richly endowed, remained subject to the abbey of Saints Peter and Paul in Bath, whence, probably, its first community came. The priory of St. John the Baptist, near the city of CORK,[11] was dependent on the same abbey; and in this instance, also, the founder mentioned is King John. A special charter was granted to the priory of Waterford by Edward II., in the year 1315. The prior of this house in 1227 was made Bishop of Waterford. We find a most interesting account of the last will of an English Benedictine, named John, who had been appointed to

[7] Walsh, p. 417.
[8] "Ware's Bishops," p. 186, *sq.*
[9] [10] Walsh, pp. 669, 687.
[11] Alemand, p. 148.

the diocese of Ardfert in the year 1215, but whose death occurred in 1245 in the monastery of St. Alban's, to which he bequeathed a number of valuable books, together with a white and purple stole embroidered in silver and containing many precious relics,—said to have possessed wondrous efficacy in restoring the insane. He also left to the same community three rings holding sapphires of extraordinary size, one of which was reputed to have had miraculous power because of the most sacred relic inlaid.[12] There were many distinguished Irish Benedictines of the same epoch to whom, however, rare allusion is made: labouring solely to perpetuate the traditions of their glorious Order here in Ireland, they shrank from everything likely to win them mere human praise.

In the year 1209, the ancient abbey of St. Fechin at FORE,[13] county Westmeath, was restored for the monks of St. Benedict by Walter de Lacy, a community being furnished for the same by the monastery of St. Taurin, at Evreux, in Normandy. After war had broken out between England and France, this priory, together with several other houses of the Irish Benedictines, was seized by the English king as "alien property" (A.D. 1369). But the religious were at length allowed to follow their holy vocation there in peace once more. There was another Benedictine priory at a place called GLASSCARRIG[14] on the Wexford coast, about six miles south-east of Gorey. It was built sometime during the fourteenth century, Griffin Condon and David Roche being among its principal benefactors. The members of the first community came from the abbey of St. Dogmael in Pembrokeshire; and the abbot of that monastery was allowed the right of sending one of his

[12] "Ware's Bishops," p. 519. [13] Archdall, p. 713.

[14] Alemand, p. 147. Inchmean and Inchmore, in the county Roscommon, are said to have been the sites of Benedictine monasteries.—Walsh, p. 630.

own subjects to succeed as superior on the death of the prior of Glasscarrig.

What some annalists say concerning certain other foundations attributed to the Irish Benedictines is not based on sufficiently reliable authority. But special mention is made of four convents of Benedictine nuns established in Ireland before the time of the Suppression. That of KILCREUNATA,[15] in the county Galway, seems to have been the most important, and had for its founder Cathal O'Connor, King of Connaught (A.D., 1200): several abbesses of this "Nunnery of the Chaste Wood" bore the same royal name. The convents of INCHMEAN,[16] county Mayo, and that of ARDCARN,[17] county Roscommon, were subject to Kilcreunata. A Benedictine convent, dedicated to St. John Baptist, was founded in CORK,[18] in the year 1327, by the members of the De Barry family. In later times (A.D. 1689), two nunneries of the Order were established in DUBLIN,[19] King James II. being then present in the city; and the hopes of the Irish Catholics having revived for a while after the terrible trials of so many years . . . .

There are certain matters of very great interest in connection with the history of Monasticism in Ireland to which we had not a favourable opportunity of alluding in the foregoing pages, but which we may touch upon briefly in this place: such as the difference between the various houses of each religious Order; the duties of the monastic officials; and the general design of the claustral buildings and adjoining church—with, perhaps, a passing reference to the everyday life of those whose holy vocation it was to sanctify themselves within these sacred precincts by prayer, study, and manual labour. As a matter of fact, the particular monastery was designated after the title of the local superior. Thus,

[15-18] Walsh, pp. 707, 464, 390. [19] Burke, p. 741.

an "abbey" was—strictly speaking—so called because the abbot ruled there in person; although here in Ireland, as has already been remarked, the custom arose of applying this name to monastic institutions indiscriminately; and, in speaking of the ruins of our ancient monasteries, the same usage prevails to a great extent even at the present day. The importance of an abbey was relative to the jurisdiction of its abbot; for a priory might be of higher rank in the particular Order, should the prior's authority happen to be greater than the abbatial power. When, however, the prior was absolutely subject to an abbot, the monastery under his charge became known as a "cell"—a name originally applied to a hermit's hut; but afterwards used to denote a religious establishment dependent on one of the greater abbeys; while the humble abode of a pious person anxious to lead a life of strictest solitude was still called a "hermitage." A "preceptory" was the home of a community of Knights Templar governed by a superior immediately subject to the Grand Master of the Order; a "commandery" had the same standing among the Knights Hospitaller. No matter to which of the monastic Orders it belonged, a foundation was known as an "hospital," if primarily intended for the relief of the poor, infirm, or afflicted. A "chantry" was merely a particular chapel, or altar specially endowed, so that Mass might be celebrated there daily for the spiritual and temporal welfare of benefactors and friends. The homes of the members of the four Mendicant Orders—the Augustinians, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the Carmelites—were called "friaries"; and although rarely endowed in the precise meaning of the word, often excelled the abbeys proper in the magnificence of their architecture. They were usually classified as "priories," "vicariates," "colleges" or "novitiates"—according to the office of the superior in charge; or

owing to the purpose for which the monastery had been founded.[20]

As for the manifold duties of the various monastic officials, they were discharged in all Irish monasteries; but the religious appointed to attend to them may not have borne the same titles in the different Orders: just as at the present day similar offices are performed in every community by those deemed best qualified in the judgment of superiors to further the diverse objects which those ancient names imply. The "Almoner" (*eleemosynarius*) had particular care of the poor, distributing among them, at the superior's discretion, such donations as benefactors of the monastery desired to be dispensed in charity. Another official, called the "Pitantiarius," was intrusted with certain sums of money which might be spent either for the benefit of the poor or of the community, but on special occasions only. The "Master of the Fabric" (*magister operis*), was required to have the buildings kept in good repair. Far more numerous and important were the duties of the "Sacristan," than those usually attributed to the holder of this office. Not merely had he charge of the sacred vessels, vestments and ornaments pertaining to the church; he was obliged, moreover, to account for the offerings made for Masses at the different altars, and for the donations which were to be applied for the purposes of his office alone. The Sacristan also provided the bread and wine required in the Holy Sacrifice; and it was his duty to arrange for the burial of the dead. Everything necessary for the dormitory, or sleeping apartments—such as beds and bed-clothing—was supplied by the "Chamberlain" (*camerarius*), who, likewise, furnished the religious with the complete monastic habit, "and with razors and towels." Some writers think that the Chamberlain

[20] "*Notitia Monastica*" (Tanner), pp. xxiii.-xxviii. Archdall, p. xxi.

had also charge of the "treasury." The "Cellarer" (*cellerarius*) was responsible for the provisions to be used both by the community and by the guests visiting the monastery: under his control were all kinds of flesh, fish, fowl, wine, bread, corn, malt—for ale and beer—salt and oatmeal; he had to provide wood for firing; and all the kitchen utensils. In charge of the "Bursar" (*thesaurarius*)—as distinct from the Chamberlain—were the funds of the monastery; he received the customary revenues, and met the various expenses. It was the duty of the "Chanter" or "Precentor" to look after the choir, furnishing books and salaries for those who sang or played there, and were not members of the community. He had, also, to keep the organ in repair; to guard the seal of the monastery, and the *Liber Diurnalis*, or "minute-book"; and to supply the ink, colours and parchment for the *scriptorium*: a monastic apartment deemed of the utmost importance; for there were transcribed the books to be used and preserved in the library—such as copies of the Holy Scriptures, of the writings of the great Doctors of the Church, of the Classics and of Histories—by which means the most valuable works of antiquity escaped the ravages of the ages. Here, too, the monastic annalists recorded contemporary events, thus preparing for the future historian a reliable source of information concerning matters of moment and interest in those remote times.

Visitors to the monastery were received and waited upon by the "Guest-Master" (*hospitilarius*), who saw that they had "firing, napkins, towels," and everything else needful for their comfort. When ill, or feeble, the religious were placed under the care of the "Infirmarian," who had at his disposal medicine and all that was requisite for so important a charge: it was his duty, moreover, to prepare the dead for burial. The "Refectorian" looked after the dining-hall, and

its furniture; and he took care of the silver not intended for use in the church or sacristy. Besides these officials, frequent mention is made of the "Kitchener" (*coquinarius*); the "Gardener" (*gardinarius* ?); and the "Janitor" (*portarius*); but most probably all these offices implied charges of far greater trust than what the names would lead us to infer: for instance, we read of the *Portarius* of a certain monastery who was afterwards elected abbot in the same place.[21]

These various offices will assist us in forming an idea of the everyday life in one of our ancient Irish monasteries; the very ruins of the sacred edifices further aiding us to realize how time was employed there by those who had devoted their lives to penance and labour and prayer. All those abbeys and friaries were invariably designed to meet the requirements of the religious vocation; so that the structural arrangement was most convenient for the discharge of duties insuring constant progress in the spiritual way, not alone by the exercises of Religion, but by study and even manual toil. Hence, the church and the choir; the chapter-room, the cloister and the cells were the places where the monks and friars mostly passed their time. In some Orders, the members of the community worked separately in their "cells," or sleeping apartments; while in others, each religious had his appointed place for study in the cloister, which was a kind of wide corridor on three sides of the square formed by the church and monastic buildings. This corridor was lighted from without by finely glazed windows, reaching, in most instances, to the ground. In the recess of each window there was a seat—often elaborately carved like the beautifully finished wainscotting—with a desk to support books or the materials for writing.[22] Silence was rigorously observed here;

[21] "*Notitia Monastica*" (Tanner), pp. xxix-xxxii.
[22] Compare "Scoti-Monasticon" (Walcott), pp. xv. 237, *sq.*

however, this was anything but a mortification to those engaged in the most absorbing studies: whether preparing learned treatises on Theology, Sacred Scripture, and the Sciences; or employed in historical research; or devoted to the interpretation of those ancient Irish legends containing, beneath the fascinating allegories of our pagan poet-annalists, so much information relative to the nation's past—a treasure yielded only to patient study and prudent, loving care. Although the fruits of such unremitting labours perished, to a woeful extent, in the wholesale destruction of Irish monastic archives in the sixteenth century; still the pupils of the monks and friars had already acquired a practical knowledge of those traditions of an heroic age; and from generation to generation this knowledge bore further fruit in many an ancient Irish family, whose members would emulate their ancestors' famous deeds by their own fervent love of honour, justice and truth.

Close by the cloister was the community-room where the religious assembled at stated times—once or twice a day—for recreation. This department usually opened into a spacious garden, in which the novices and younger members of the community might, at the discretion of the superior, engage in innocent amusements so long as these did not offend against severe monastic decorum in any way. The chapter-house, or chapter-room, was also within easy reach of the cloister: here were held all important meetings of the community for the discussion of the interests, spiritual and temporal, of the monastery; here, too, faults were corrected, the superior exhorting his subjects to still more fervent efforts in the practice of the Regular Life. Of course each Order followed its own methods in the distribution of time; yet the recital of the Divine Office pre-supposed a certain similarity in the different *Horaria*—especially as in many instances the monks and friars rose at midnight,

or in the early morning, to attend to the solemn duties of the choir.[23]

Thus admirably suited for the purposes of community life, the Irish monasteries were, as a rule, buildings of an austere type of architecture; but the adjoining churches were often truly superb. We here allude to the sacred edifices erected by the monks and friars from the period of the revival of Monasticism in Ireland. The Gothic style prevailed in these churches, the remains of which are easily distinguished from those ruined "temples of prayer" dating from the middle of the ninth to the middle of the twelfth century—with the elaborately arched door-ways and windows characteristic of the style known as "Irish Romanesque;" and in still more striking contrast with the interesting relics of our primitive sanctuaries, showing no trace of an arch over the narrow door, or the one small window: built without either mortar or cement, and constructed, so far as we can tell, sometime during the first three centuries of the existence of the Irish Church.

The interior of the mediæval sacred edifices was, almost invariably, to be found furnished in keeping with the outward simple grandeur of each stately pile. In the woodwork, drapery, sacred vessels, ornaments and vestments was displayed the very highest form of ecclesiastical Art. And if here in Ireland we do not possess far more abundant proof of the monastic artist's skill—the goldsmith's, the jeweller's, the designer's and the engraver's—it is owing to the avarice and vandalism of those responsible for the destruction of our ancient monasteries. The greater festivals were kept in the monastic churches with fervent solemnity, such as to excite the wrapt devotion of the Faithful assisting

[23] Compare "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries" (Gasquet), vol. i., p. xvii. Also, "The English Black Monks of St. Benedict" (Taunton), vol. i., pp. 50-96.

ROCK AND RUINS OF CASHEL. (p. 140.)

at the dread mysteries of the New Law. So that the ruin, which is now but an object of interest to the antiquarian and, perhaps, very difficult of access in some remote wild place, was once a beauteous edifice destined for the perpetual service of sacrifice and prayer ; at the building of which the monastic architect himself would joyfully toil with his brethren, raising the walls with loving care.[24] Thither came crowds of earnest worshippers from those surroundings villages and hamlets, at present barely existing in name. While awaiting the consummation of the august Mystery there, everything that met the gaze of the Faithful tended to raise their thoughts and affections to the hidden glory of Him whose House is the home of the friendless, the sorrow-stricken, and the poor. The carving of the rood-screen, and of the stalls in the choir ; the embroidery on the tapestry round the altars or before the portals ; the designs on the carpets spread over the sanctuary floor—on every side Christian Art illustrated the familiar Truths of Catholic Belief. No pains were spared by the monks and friars in the adorning of their churches, their benefactors being most generous with gifts towards the same end ; we are assured that often the light of the votive candles in the various shrines—particularly in that of Our Lady—was reflected in great splendour from the profusion of jewels set in ornaments of silver and gold.[25] Yet the pious people well knew—the life-example of the friars and monks themselves keeping this truth vividly before their minds—that beyond the mystical significance attached to those precious stones and metals as an evidence of man's good-will, they had no value at all before Him who would claim the priceless offering of their own pure hearts.

[24] "The Monks of the West," vol. vi., p. 223.
[25] "Scoti-Monasticon," p. 16, *sq.*

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE ORDER OF CITEAUX.

THE Cistercian Order, now represented in Ireland by the Trappist monasteries of Mount Melleray and Roscrea, is, in reality, an offshoot of the great Benedictine stem. St. Robert, himself a Benedictine, was its holy Founder; but it had been his pious ambition merely to live up to the Rule of St. Benedict in all its primitive rigour—a number of minor relaxations having by that time crept into the Order, especially in France. As he was unable, in the beginning, to find a sufficient number of monks willing to second his efforts in the work of reform by accepting the more austere interpretation of their Rule, he established a monastery in the forest of Molesme, near Chatillon, A.D. 1075; and there, together with some zealous companions, he began to lead a strictly eremitical mode of life.

However, St. Robert was not yet satisfied that their method of observance could be considered in perfect harmony with the spirit of St. Benedict; so in the year 1098, he withdrew to a desert place called Citeaux (*Cistercium*) some distance from Dijon, and there founded another monastery for those who should desire to follow the Benedictine Rule in its utmost rigour, and who were destined to become known eventually as Cistercians. St. Robert himself was soon recalled to Molesme, by Papal authority, in order to take charge of that community; hence it was Alberic, his successor at Citeaux, that framed the Cistercian Constitutions. The holy Stephen Harding—a monk from Sherborne abbey in

England—following afterwards, did wonders in the course of time for the propagation of the now practically new Order: his being the glory to have received the young St. Bernard, with thirty kinsmen, into Religion at Citeaux (A.D. 1113); to send him, later on, to found the great abbey of Clairvaux, whence came the first colony of Cistercians to Ireland.

In the first year of the thirteenth century, there were fully eighteen hundred houses of this Order in existence, built, for the most part, in remote valleys and desert places by preference; the vocation of the monks being personal sanctification by penitential solitude and prayer. For several centuries there was no falling away from the primitive fervour of the Institute: not until the disturbed state of Europe necessitated dispensations among the Cistercians as well as in the various other religious Orders. But the glory of their first zeal shone out again at times in the different Reforms introduced; the most famous being that inaugurated in the year 1660 by Armand Jean de Rancé in the ancient abbey of La Trappe —a bulwark against Jansenism, surviving the horrors of the dread Revolution in France.[1]

As already stated the Cistercians first appeared in Ireland at that revival of Monasticism which was due to the zeal of St. Malachy O'Moore. Priority of foundation is given to the celebrated abbey of the "Virgin Mary" in DUBLIN,[2] said to have been originally established for Benedictine monks by the Danes, after their conversion to Christianity; but there are writers who claim the credit of this pious work for certain Irish princes (A.D. 948). At all events, it was owing to the personal influence of St. Malachy himself that this abbey passed into the possession of the Cistercians in the year 1139. As St Bernard's dear friend, he well knew the fervour of the monks of Clairvaux; and felt sure that their presence

[1] "Histoire du Clergé," vol. ii., pp. 242-258. [2] Walsh, p. 421.

in Ireland would tend wonderfully towards the attainment of the great object which he had in view. St. Mary's was very richly endowed, and its abbot took rank as a spiritual peer of the Realm. However, the only records now extant concerning this foundation chiefly relate to the monastic property, and to the abbatial privileges, such documents being jealously preserved by the plunderers of the Irish monasteries as a strange vindication of their title to a share in the sacrilegious spoils. This was the first house of the Order in Ireland to be seized by the agents of King Henry the Eighth. There were fifty monks dwelling there at the time; all of whom were captured and cast into prison to endure unspeakable tortures until at length they were led out to receive the martyr's crown at a place called Ballyboght, sometime in the year 1541.[3]

The present MONKSTOWN,[4] county Dublin, is said to derive its name from a Cistercian foundation made there; concerning which, however, nothing further is known.

Dermod O'Dempsey, Prince of Offaly, most generously endowed an abbey for Cistercians at MONASTEREVIN,[5] on the river Barrow, county Kildare, A.D. 1178. Its abbots were also lords spiritual; and in the year 1199 the religious holding that office was made Bishop of Leighlin. This house was granted to Adam Loftus at the dissolution of the Irish monasteries; but afterwards the abbey lands were included in the Drogheda estate. We are told that a Cistercian, named Father Nicholas FitzGerald—a descendant of the Geraldines—was put to death for the Faith during the month of September, A.D. 1581. He is said to have been a member of the Dublin community, and succeeded in escaping the fate of his brethren for some time. When, at length, captured in a wood, whither he had fled from his persecutors, he was

[3] "Our Martyrs," p. 90.

[4] "Appendix Monastica" (De Burgo), p. 741.

[5] Walsh, p. 488.

still wearing the habit of his Order—a sufficient evidence of guilt to ensure his being instantly condemned to a most barbarous death. As a great favour, his sorrowing parents were permitted to remove their martyred son's quartered remains, which they lovingly and reverently interred in the family tomb within the Brigidine church at Kildare.[6]

The great abbey of MELLIFONT,[7] county Louth, situated in a charming valley not very far from Drogheda, was founded for a community of the Order of Citeaux in the year 1142 at the instance of St. Malachy O'Moore. Donogh O'Carrol, Prince of Oriel, was its principal benefactor; the members of the first community having been trained by St. Bernard himself at Clairvaux: among them the four young Irishmen sent thither for that purpose by St. Malachy. But it was not until the year 1157 that the ceremony of the solemn consecration of the abbey church took place, Gelasius, Primate of Ireland, officiating on that occasion in presence of a great number of priests and prelates; of the King of Ireland, and of many princes. The royal offering of King Murtogh O'Loghlin was a hundred and forty oxen, sixty ounces of pure gold, and a townland near Drogheda. Several other Irish princes bestowed equally munificent gifts on the monks; and we are assured that, perhaps, the richest donation ever made to Mellifont was to express the remorse of one whose sin had been the cause of the nation's greatest woe: in reparation of the crime of Dervorghilla, the faithless wife of Tiernan O'Rourke of Breifny. Although founded by an Irish prince long before the coming of the Anglo-Normans, we find it recorded in the year 1380 that Parliament decreed no "mere Irishman" should be professed as a monk at Mellifont. Still the abbot of this house was himself one of the peers of the Realm. The community numbered a hundred and fifty choir-religious at the Suppression,

[6] "Our Martyrs," p. 120. [7] Alemand, p. 167.

not including the lay-brothers and dependants. All the monastic property passed into the hands of Sir Edward Moore, ancestor of the Drogheda family.

BECTIFF abbey,[8] on the Boyne, county Meath, was endowed for the Cistercians by Murchard O'Melaghlin, King of Meath, and dedicated to the Blessed Virign (A.D. 1146). Its ruins still show what a magnificent structure the original building must have been. The abbot sat as a baron in Parliament; and, judging from the inventory made in the reign of Henry VIII., its possessions were very valuable. In the year 1488 an abbot of Bectiff, James of Castlemartin, received the king's pardon for having favoured the cause of the Pretender, Lambert Simnell. The Cistercian abbey of BEAUBEC,[9] in the same county, was built by Walter de Lacy, lord of Meath, in the course of the thirteenth century, and placed under the protection of Our Lady and St. Laurence. It was assigned, by royal licence, to the monks of Furness in the year 1332; in 1348 the deed was confirmed by King Edward the First. On the site of the ancient monastery of KILLBEGGAN[10]—founded in the adjoining county of Westmeath by St. Becan, sometime during the sixth century—another abbey was erected for the same Order, the Dalton family receiving the credit of having supplied the funds for this meritorious undertaking (A.D. 1200). The first community came from Mellifont, and the Blessed Virgin was the heavenly Patroness. While on a pilgrimage to this abbey in the year 1213, Melaghlin MacCoughlan, Prince of Delvin, died; a few years later the names of several of his sons occur among the obituary notices of Kilbeggan. There, too, (A.D. 1236) died Hugh O'Malone, Bishop of Clonmacnoise, who, A.D. 1298, had among his successors in that See a distinguished abbot of this same monastery.[11]

[8] Archdall, p. 516. [9] Ibidem. [10] Ibidem, p. 717.
[11] "Ware's Bishops," p. 172.

About the year 1148, Diarmit MacMurrough O'Cavanagh, King of Leinster, endowed an abbey for the Order of Citeaux at BALTINGLASS,[12] county Wicklow. The founder himself is said to have died there in 1151. Probably, in this instance also, Mellifont supplied the members of the first community, the abbot eventually taking rank as a peer in Parliament. At the time of Lambert Simnell's pretension the superior of this house was implicated in the adventurer's cause. When John Comyn, the English Archbishop of Dublin, convened a synod in Christ Church (A.D. 1185), Albinus O'Mulloy, abbot of Baltinglass, and afterwards Bishop of Ferns, was present and spoke to such purpose against certain abuses and scandals existing among the English and Welsh clergy that he succeeded in getting those evils removed: not, however, until Archbishop Comyn had called upon the celebrated Gerald Barry to reply to the charges made. Even while trying hard to defend his countrymen, Barry felt himself bound, in honour and justice, to testify to the exemplary lives of the priests of Ireland, who excelled in all virtues: being most devoted to prayer and study, and opposed to all worldliness—their spirit of austerity being so great that most of them fasted until dusk every day.[13]

Donald O'Brien caused a Cistercian abbey to be erected at MONASTERNENAGH,[14] county Limerick, A.D. 1151, placing it under the protection of Our Blessed Lady. The abbot of this house was entitled to sit as a baron in Parliament; and, in this instance, likewise, the first monks were taken from Mellifont. King John is numbered among its benefactors. Subject to Monasternenagh was another foundation made for the Irish Cistercians, in the year 1188, at ABBEYFEAL,[15] also in the county Limerick. There were several other establishments of the Order in

[12] Walsh, p. 715. [13] "Ware's Bishops," p. 439.
[14-16] Alemand, pp. 184-185.

the same county; but very little is known concerning their history. The most interesting item of information relates to the abbey of ABBINGDON-WOTHENY,[16] founded by Theobald FitzWalter, head of the Butler family, whose wife, Maud, was sister of St. Thomas à Becket, the martyred Archbishop of Canterbury.[17] The founder's death occurred in 1206, some years after he had completed this work of piety in honour of the Blessed Virgin. The members of this community came in the beginning from the abbey of Savigniac in Normandy. Although the abbot was himself a peer of the Realm, we find that the prelate governing the community in the year 1290 had to pay a heavy fine because of his good-will towards "the mere Irish"—the king's open enemies. Then there was St. Mary's abbey of KILLSHANE,[18] established in the year 1198, and made subject to that of CORCUMROE,[19] county Clare, to which it eventually became united.

The Cistercian abbey of ATHLONE,[20] situated on the Roscommon side of the town, dated from the year 1150, and had for its Patrons Saints Peter and Paul. King John is said to have been well disposed towards this community; in exchange for the site upon which he built the castle of Athlone, he allowed the abbey certain revenues, A.D. 1216; and in the year 1279 King Edward I. bestowed the Shannon fisheries, and the toll of the Bridge of Athlone on the monks of Saints Peter and Paul. A very holy and learned member of this community, named Thomas Curnin, died about the year 1455. The great Cistercian abbey of BOYLE[21] was also in the county Roscommon. It was endowed by MacDermot, Prince of Moylurg, and soon became one of the most renowned monastic institutions in Europe.

[17] "Historical Collections" (Bowes: Dublin, 1758). NOTE.—This interesting work was compiled—by Burke—from the writings of Protestant historians to show the evils resulting from the Reformation.

[18-20] Alemand, pp. 183-190.

The first community—taken from Mellifont, which may justly be regarded as the Mother-house of the Order in Ireland—settled down in the beginning at a place called GRELACDINACH,[22] A.D. 1148. For their abbot they had the learned Peter O'Morra, afterwards Bishop of Clonfert, who was drowned at Port-de-Caneog on the Shannon (A.D. 1171). His successor, Aodh O'Maccain, changed the monks to DRUIMCONAID[23]; but the next abbot, Maurice O'Dubhay, removed them to BUNFINNE,[24] where they remained a few years; and finally the same abbot took them to Boyle, which he considered a more suitable site for the great abbey and church which he had undertaken to build (A.D. 1161). This zealous abbot died in the year 1174; however, it was only in 1218 that the monks could have their church solemnly consecrated and placed under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin. In 1235, the English troops, commanded by Maurice FitzGerald and MacWilliam Bourke, sacked Boyle abbey; but the effects of their ravages were soon repaired by the piety of the Irish Faithful. The abbot Dunchad O'Daly, who was known as the "Ovid of Ireland," died there in the year 1250; and in 1342, Dermot Roe MacDermot—a descendant of the noble founder—who had resigned his rank as Prince of Moylurg to become a monk at Boyle. Tumaltach, another of the MacDermot family, was abbot at the time of the suppression of the monastery during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. He was succeeded by Father Gelasius O'Cullenan, a member of an ancient Connaught family, who fearlessly demanded back the monastic lands and buildings from the apostate nobleman to whom they had been granted by the royal agents Strange to say not alone were his wishes complied with in every respect, but the Queen's favourite became so deeply impressed by the holy abbot's virtues, and by the austere life led by the members of his community, that

[21-24] Alemand, p. 191. Walsh, p. 624.

he himself actually took the religious habit among them after having given a most edifying proof of the sincerity of his conversion. The same zealous O'Cullenan was arrested in Dublin during the course of the year 1580; and had promises of the greatest rewards held out to him, if he would renounce the Catholic Faith. But, like the Blessed Thomas More, he replied that those who thus tried to deceive him could give him no guarantee at all of his being spared even for a single moment to enjoy the favours which they offered. Hence, he deemed it far wiser to obey One Who has promised His faithful servants a life of eternal happiness in the world to come.[25] He was forthwith sentenced to a cruel death—which he met with wondrous courage and joy, his contemporaries proclaiming him: "the pride of the Cistercian Order; the light of that century; and the glory of all Ireland."

Not far from Boyle abbey—used as a fortress at the time—the O'Donnell won a famous victory over the army of Queen Elizabeth. He had promised his followers beforehand, as the highest possible reward, that room should be found at the very Altar for each one who took part with him in that battle of Dunaveeragh.

The ancient sanctuary of SHRUEL,[26] county Longford, was replaced by a Cistercian monastery, built by the O'Ferall, A.D. 1150, in honour of Our Blessed Lady; and made dependent on Mellifont. At LERRHA,[27] in the same county, the Cistercians had another abbey, also dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. It, probably, occupied the site of the ancient monastery established there by a St. Gosachus, who is said to have been one of the disciples of St. Patrick. The monks of Citeaux were brought thither, A.D. 1205, by Lord Richard Tuite from St. Mary's abbey near Dublin. After that nobleman had been killed, by the fall of a tower in the town of Athlone, his remains were interred at

[25] "Our Martyrs," p. 115. [26] Alemand, p. 180.
[27] Ibidem. Walsh, p. 538.

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Lerrha (A.D. 1211). This abbey suffered much in the year 1315 at the hands of the soldiers of Edward Bruce; but it was restored in the course of time. An abbot, named Peter, presumably of the same house, was appointed Bishop of Cloyne by Pope Boniface IX. A.D. 1398.

The next Cistercian foundation alluded to by the annalists—who appear to have followed no prescribed order in their important records beyond assigning the particular county in which the various sites were chosen—is the abbey of ODORNEY,[28] county Kerry, endowed by a member of the FitzMaurice family in the year 1154, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The fact of the abbot of this house taking rank as a peer of the Realm shows that it was among the principal establishments of the Order in the Kingdom. Towards the close of his zealous career, Christian O'Conarchy, Bishop of Lismore and Legate Apostolic in Ireland, retired to this holy retreat, and died there in 1186.

With the cordial approval of the Kings and nobles of Ulster, Maurice MacLoughlin, Monarch of Ireland, founded an abbey for the Cistercians at NEWRY,[29] county Down, between the years 1140 and 1153. One of its first abbots, Finnian MacTiarcain, was appointed Bishop of Kildare, A.D. 1160. Two years later, A.D. 1162, the library was destroyed by fire; and also the "Yew Tree," said to have been planted by St. Patrick and from which Newry derives its name. Because it had been established for the "mere Irish," King Edward III. sequestered the possessions of this abbey in the year 1373, granting most of the land to one of his English subjects. Among the Cistercian Confessors of the year 1642, was the Prior of Newry—put to death by the halter in that town together with a secular priest owing to their zeal in preaching the true Faith. Father Luke Bergin was another monk of the same Order slain by the heretics in the year 1655;

[28] Archdall, p. 305. [29] Ibidem, p. 126.

his companions in suffering on that occasion were Daniel O'Brien, Dean of Ferns, and a priest named James Murchu. The remains of these heroic Confessors were interred amid the ruins of a certain Franciscan friary; but no mention is made of the place of their execution.[30]

In the county Down, also, on a peninsula of Lough Strangford, Sir John de Courcy built an abbey for the Cistercians at INNIS-COURCY,[31] A.D. 1180. It was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and received its first community from the great monastery of Furness. The founder seems to have been most generous to this house; but we are reminded that it was at the expense of other Irish monastic institutions which he had despoiled. Africa, his wife, endowed GRAY ABBEY,[32] in the barony of Ardes, county Down, for the same Order (A.D. 1193); placing it, likewise, under the protection of Our Lady. The abbey of Holmcultrain in Cumberland furnished the members of its first community. Having chosen it to be her own last resting-place, the effigy of the foundress, carved in stone, was set in a niche on the Gospel-side of the High Altar. Like many other Cistercian foundations made in Ireland, this abbey bore a distinctive title, being popularly known as "St. Mary's of the Yoke of God." Judging from its ruins, and from the inventory taken at the time of its suppression, we can form an idea of its importance in the Order. CUMBER abbey[33] also was in this county, dating from the year 1199; and under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin. Its founder was Bryan Catha Dun, who brought over a community from the Cistercian abbey of Alba-landa in Wales. A few years afterwards (A.D. 1201) this pious man was slain in battle by Sir John de Courcy. Mention is made of a certain John O'Mulligan as being the last abbot of Cumber. Here we may say that the State Papers dealing with this subject furnish the most striking proof of the

[30] "Our Martyrs," p. 362. [31-33] Walsh, pp. 416, 415, 411.

utter failure of the dissolution of the Irish monasteries as a means to the iniquitous end which the oppressors of the monks and friars had in view: the members of the Order of Citeaux being among those against whom the royal agents had most bitter complaint to make.[34]

There was only one house of the Cistercian Order in the county Derry—that of MOYCOSQUIN,[35] founded either in the year 1172 or 1218; and dedicated to the Mother of God: it was also called "the Abbey of the Clear Spring." Nothing is known concerning its benefactors; but allusion is made to an abbot named John, whom Pope Boniface IX. appointed to the See of Derry, A.D. 1401. As for the Cistercian abbey established at HILLFOTHUIR,[36] county Donegal, A.D. 1194, we are merely told that owing to the wars between the native Irish and the Anglo-Norman invaders, it eventually became united to the abbey of Arstrath-Ashroe, in the same county, upon which it had been dependent. This abbey of ASHROE,[37] on the river Erne near Ballyshannon, was built by Roderick O'Cananan, Prince of Tyrconnell, in the year 1178; the members of the first community having been supplied by the abbot of Boyle, county Roscommon. A king of Tyrconnell, Donnell O'Donnell, came thither to prepare for death, A.D. 1241; and another scion of the same family, Thomas MacCormac O'Donnell—abbot of Ashroe and renowned for his great holiness and learning—was consecrated Bishop of Raphoe in the year 1319; while in 1348 the See of Achonry was governed by Nicholas O'Hedram, also a monk of the same abbey. The buildings were destroyed by fire in 1377; and in 1398 the community suffered much at the hands of some lawless persons. All the monastic property was seized by the Elizabethan plunderers; but so long as the O'Neills and the O'Donnells had the power to protect them, we are assured that as many as thirty religious were enabled

[34] "State Papers" (Brady), p. 57, *sq.* [35-37] Walsh, pp. 401, 406, 402.

to follow their holy vocation there in peace. It was only after those noble Princes had at length been driven into exile by the English that Ashroe could be pillaged with impunity: then, too, Fathers Eugene O'Gallagher and Bernard O'Trevir were called upon to lay down their lives for the Faith (A.D. 1606). Another monk of the Order of Citeaux, Father James Eustace, received the Martyr's palm on the 8th of September in the year 1620; and in 1645 Father Edmund Mulligan, "the oldest of the Cistercians in Ireland," merited a like glorious reward for his heroic constancy and zeal; being at the time in the seventy-second year of his age.[38]

The munificence of Harvey de Monte Maurisco enabled the Cistercians to erect a great abbey at DUNBRODY,[39] on the river Barrow, county Wexford (A.D. 1178). Resigning an important office of trust, which he held under the Earl of Pembroke, the founder himself, a year afterwards, joined the Order of Citeaux in the abbey of the Holy Trinity at Canterbury. Dunbrody abbey was dedicated to Our Lady and St. Benedict. Among its benefactors were Richard, Earl of Pembroke, and his grandson Walter, who seem, however, to have so bestowed their gifts as also to benefit the monks of Bildewas, in Shropshire; for in the year 1182 the community of the latter abbey granted their rights over Dunbrody to the Cistercians of Dublin, the deed being ratified by the Prince, who subsequently became known as King John. Another great benefactor of this abbey was Herlewin, Bishop of Leighlin, whose death occurred in the year 1216. This was one of the foundations affected by that shameful statute forbidding the reception of "the mere Irish" (A.D. 1380); a fact which did not prevent the community getting into serious trouble with the representatives of the law in the course of a very few years. In the beginning of the fifteenth century, King Henry the Fourth seems to have

[38] "Our Martyrs," pp. 220, 260, 301. [39] Alemand, p. 171.

been favourably disposed towards the monks of Dunbrody.

The origin of TINTERN abbey,[40] also in the county Wexford, was due to a resolution taken by William, Earl of Pembroke, when in imminent peril at sea. Hence, it was known as "St. Mary's of the Vow"; and called "Tintern," because the first monks came thither from the great Cistercian abbey of that name in Monmouthshire. Its possessions were very valuable; and the abbot took rank as a Baron in Parliament. An Irishman was raised to that dignity in the year 1346; still in 1380 Parliament enacted that in future the "mere Irish" should not be permitted even to join the Order at Tintern.

ABBEYLEIX,[41] in the Queen's County, derives its name from a Cistercian foundation made there by Corcheger O'More in honour of the Blessed Virgin (A.D. 1183). The monks who formed the first community were taken from the monastery of Baltinglass. It was near Abbeyleix that the English met with so signal a defeat in the year 1421; the Irish on that occasion being led by a descendant of the pious Corcheger O'More. The Ormond family, whose ancestor had been conquered in that same battle, obtained a considerable part of the monastic property at the suppression of Abbeyleix.

The abbey of DOUSK, or GRAIGNEMANACH [42]—"the Vale of St. Saviour"—in the county Kilkenny, was built for a community of Cistercians brought over from the monastery of Stanly, in Wiltshire, by William Mareschal, Earl of Pembroke, A.D. 1204. It was under the patronage of Our Lady. In the year 1225 the founder's son confirmed all the donations previously made to the monks of Dousk. It was one of the houses to suffer by the infamous Decree

[40] Alemand, p. 171.

NOTE.—Stephen's translation of "*L'Histoire Monastique d'Irelande*" is far more useful than the original work, Alemand's errors being, in many instances, corrected by the learned author of "Ancient Abbeys," etc. (London, 1722).

[41] [42] Archdall, pp. 586, 351.

of 1380, excluding "the mere Irish" from profession; although we are assured that this abbey was deeply indebted to the generosity of Irish Princes—Dermot O'Ryan and Dermot, son of the King of Leinster—from the year 1227. Charles O'Cavanagh was abbot in 1524, and bestowed many rich gifts on the community, notably a beautiful silver-gilt cross. He assisted at the Fifth Lateran Council (A.D. 1512-1517), as Vicar-General of the Bishop of Leighlin; and was still abbot of Dousk when the monastery fell into the hands of heretical plunderers (A.D. 1537). But the monks must have been allowed to remain on there until the reign of Queen Elizabeth; for we read that the entire community was seized about the year 1584; and that the religious were all put to death for having refused to obey an impious decree which implied the denial of their Faith.[43] The famous abbey of JERPOINT[44] was also in the county Kilkenny. Founded sometime in the twelfth century by Donald, Prince of Ossory, "the mere Irish"—his fellow-countrymen—were prevented taking the vows of Religion there by the Parliament in which the abbot of Jerpoint had himself a right to sit as a spiritual peer of the Realm. It was richly endowed by various benefactors, whose donations received the sanction of King John. A holy Bishop, named Felix O'Dullany, died in the year 1202; and his remains were interred in this abbey: it is recorded that many miracles were wrought at his tomb. The Ormond family became enriched by the confiscation of Jerpoint.

In the county Cork, the Roches founded an abbey for Cistercian monks, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, at FERMOY,[45] on the Blackwater (A.D. 1171). The religious were taken from one of the houses of the same Order in the county Tipperary. A generous grant was made to this abbey in 1290 by Maurice le Fleming; the only

[43] "Our Martyrs," p. 120. [44] Walsh, p. 493.

other item of interest recorded is the sad death of the abbot Maurice Garton, who was drowned in the river Funcheon, A.D. 1301. The Cistercian monastery of MAURE,[46] in the same county, was endowed in 1172 by Dermod MacCormac MacCarthy, King of Desmond, who obtained a community from the abbey of Baltinglass. An abbot of Maure, John Imurily, was consecrated Bishop of Ross in the year 1519. At the Suppression, all the monastic lands and buildings were granted for ever to a certain Nicholas Walsh by Queen Elizabeth. Core Abbey—or "the Choir of St. Benedict," as it was called—owed its origin to the FitzGerald family, who erected this monastery for the Cistercians at MIDDLETON,[47] county Cork (A.D. 1180). It was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin; and must have been of considerable importance, judging even from the little known of its history. Some writers say that the De Barrys were the founders, and that the first community came from the Cistercian abbey of NENAY,[48] county Limerick. According to a well-established tradition, this abbey of Nenay, called "De Magio," gave forty Confessors to the Irish Church in the year 1585: they proclaimed their loyalty to the Faith and the monastic profession by gladly suffering a cruelly violent death in the cause of Truth.[49] There was another abbey of the Order of Citeaux in the county Cork at TRACTON,[50] built in the year 1224 by Maurice MacCarthy, and afterwards known as "St. Mary's." From this house, likewise, "the mere Irish" were excluded by that iniquitous Act of 1380. The abbot of St. Mary's was a "Lord of Parliament." In this county, too, was the abbey of INCHIRIE,[51] established for the same Order, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, the only fact recorded concerning its history.

[45-48] Alemand, pp. 181-185. [49] "Our Martyrs," p. 192.

[50] [51] Ware ("Antiquities"), pp. 101-102. Allusion is also made to ABBEY-MAHON, which the Cistercians are said to have founded for themselves in the barony of Barryroe.—Walsh, p. 383.

Of the Cistercian abbeys founded in the county Tipperary, mention is first made of the monastery of HORE,[52] situated near Cashel, dedicated to Our Lady, and originally intended for the monks of St. Benedict. But in the year 1272, David MacCarvil, Archbishop of Cashel, introduced a community of Cistercians there from Mellifont abbey, taking the habit of the Order among them himself eventually. William Fethard was a great benefactor to this house (A.D. 1290), the entire possessions of which passed into the hands of Queen Elizabeth's favourites at the Suppression. An hospital for lepers, opened at Cashel by Sir David de Latimer, in honour of St. Nicholas, became united to Hore Abbey about the time it was occupied by the monks of Citeaux. Some writers speak of a Cistercian foundation at GLANDY,[53] which seems to have been dependent upon Jerpoint abbey; Glandy is, however, in the county Cork. And there was the famed abbey of HOLY CROSS,[54] on the bank of the river Suir, founded in 1182 by Donagh Carbragh O'Brien, King of Leinster, in honour of the Holy Cross, Our Lady, and St. Benedict. Probably its first community was taken from "De Magio Abbey," county Limerick. As a spiritual peer of the Realm, the abbot was styled "Earl of Holy Cross"; and, usually, held the office of Vicar of the Order in Ireland. Still we find that at a General Chapter, convened at Clairvaux in the year 1249, the monastery of Holy Cross was made subject to the abbey of Furness, in Lancashire. A very renowned Archbishop of Cashel—Matthew O'Heney—died a most saintly death in this abbey, A.D. 1207. Another interesting record is that of the visit of "the Great O'Neal," who came in the year 1559 to venerate the relic of the True Cross, preserved in the church of this monastery. Finally, allusion is made to the abbey of INISLAUNACHT,[55] also on the Suir,

[52-54] Walsh, pp. 659, 391, 667; Alemand, p. 183.
[55] Archdall, p. 661.

where a monastic institution had been established by St. Pulcherius in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary; which ancient sanctuary was replaced, A.D. 1184, by a Cistercian foundation, jointly endowed by Donald O'Brien, King of Leinster, and Malachy O'Foelan, Prince of the Decies. An Archbishop of Cashel, who died in 1238, was interred at Inislaunacht; and the following year a new community was sent from Furness to take over the charge of this abbey. It appears, moreover, that the pious Donagh Carbragh O'Brien endowed another house for the same Order at KILLCOOLY,[56] county Tipperary, in honour of Our Lady, A.D. 1200-1209; it is supposed to have been one of the monasteries dependent on the abbey of Jerpoint in the county Kilkenny.

Perhaps the most important foundation of the Order of Citeaux in the West of Ireland was that known as ABBEYKNOCKMOY,[57] in the county Galway. Cathal O'Connor, King of Connaught, was the founder (A.D. 1190); he dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin, through whose intercession he overcame his enemies in that same place; hence the monastery was called, "Our Lady's of the Victory." Ten years afterwards this monarch was deprived of his kingdom by William FitzAdelm de Burgo, who—styled "the Conqueror of Connaught"—plundered, and all but destroyed Abbeyknockmoy. However, King Cathal was again restored (A.D. 1202); while De Burgo very soon ended his career by a most miserable death. The monastic buildings were then repaired, and the royal founder became a monk there himself in the course of time. His saintly death occurred in the year 1224; his tomb may still be seen amid the ruins of the sacred edifice so dear to him in life. We are told that to the Cistercians of Abbeyknockmoy was transferred, by Papal authority, the friary which the O'Malley family had built for Carmelites—in honour

[56] [57] Archdall pp. 664, 266.

of the Blessed Virgin—on CLARE ISLAND,[58] county Mayo.

The abbey of CORCUMROE,[59] county Clare, was royally endowed for the Order of Citeaux, either by Donald O'Brien, King of Limerick, A.D. 1194; or, according to some writers, in the year 1200 by his son, Carbroc. It was under the patronage of Our Lady; and was called "the Abbey of the Fertile Rock"—probably because of its vicinity to a celebrated well dedicated to St. Patrick on the very summit of the Rosraly mountain. The surrounding country soon became known as Gounamonagh, or "the Glen of the Monks." Although subject to the abbey of Suire, or Innislaunaght, county Tipperary, the picturesque ruins show that it must have been a foundation of much importance; for they afford abundant evidence of the grandeur of the original structure. Indeed, from this abbey was founded the Cistercian monastery of KILSHANNY,[60] county Limerick, which afterwards became dependent upon Corcumroe, the latter being eventually made subject to Furness Abbey in Lancashire. An abbot of Kilshanny was appointed Bishop of Kilfenora in the year 1273; and in 1418, John, abbot of Corcumroe, was called to govern the See of Kilmacduagh. A conspicuous object in the ruined sacred edifice is the tomb of the King of Thomond slain in a great battle fought near Corcumroe in the year 1267. The monastic lands were granted to Sir Richard Harding at the Suppression; but during the reign of Queen Elizabeth they appear to have passed into the possession of a certain Donogh O'Brien.[61]

We find mention made of only two convents of Irish Cistercian nuns, and not even these were known to all

[58] Walsh, p. 564.
[59] Ibidem, p. 372. Lewis, vol. i., p. 1, *sq.*
[60] Archdall, p. 425.
[61] Ibidem, pp. 44, 786. Walsh has "Killshane," p. 530.

our annalists: that of DOWN,[62] concerning which no information whatever, beyond the mere fact of its existence, has been preserved for us; and the nunnery of DERRY,[63] founded in the year 1218 by a member of the family of "the Royal O'Neils." Like the Cistercian monks, it was the vocation of these nuns to influence the world outside the Cloister, chiefly by the unceasing exercise of the spirit of penance and prayer.

[62] [63] Burke, p. 743, ix.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE DOMINICANS.

SAINT DOMINIC was still in his early manhood when chosen by Diego, the zealous Bishop of Osma, in Old Castile, to introduce a more austere mode of life among the Canons of the cathedral church. A wonderful success proved the wisdom of that Prelate's choice. And later on he employed the talents, especially the eloquence, of the humble Dominic in a great crusade against the Albigenses, then causing dreadful ravages in Christendom. For in that heresy had been revived the gross errors of the Manichaeans concerning a creative principle of evil, to which the Albigenses added their own false theories on Infant Baptism, and other matters of Catholic Belief. The heretics had already been condemned, A.D. 1176, at a Synod held in Alby (a city of Languedoc—whence their name) a very short time before our Saint's birth at Calaruega, also in Old Castile.

It was while engaged in thus upholding the cause of Orthodoxy, that Dominic received the inspiration to found a Religious Order which should have for its special object the defence of Catholic Truth by preaching. Attracted by his holy life and burning zeal, some sixteen young men placed themselves at his absolute disposal in the year 1215; and, finally, he obtained the sanction of Pope Innocent III. to establish such an institute; but on condition that its members should adopt the Rule

of one of the Religious Orders then existing in the Church. Being himself a Canon Regular, naturally St. Dominic preferred to conform to the monastic legislation of that great Order; selecting, moreover, a number of the very austerest statutes in the Norbertine Code; and, in the beginning, no alteration was made in the religious habit which he already wore. The first house of the new Order was opened at Toulouse; and, in the year 1216, the holy founder himself made his profession, according to the Rule thus adopted, before Pope Honorius III., who formally approved of the mode of life to which St. Dominic and his followers bound themselves, being thenceforth distinguished by the title of "Friars Preachers." Subsequently, they became more generally known throughout France by the name of "Jacobins," owing to the fact of their principal monastery in Paris having been dedicated to St. James. In the course of time the black cassock and the rochet of the Canons Regular were changed for the beautiful Dominican habit, soon to be seen in every part of the world; the popularity of the Order being vastly increased by the institution of the Tertiaries—whereby the Saint would enrol countless numbers of the laity, and of both sexes, in a grand apostolate of good example: so that they, too, by their own edifying lives might help to forward the sacred cause of Truth.

A General Chapter of the Order was held in the year of St. Dominic's death—A.D. 1221—by which time as many as sixty friaries had been established, so eager were the Faithful everywhere to profit by the ministry of those zealous Preachers; and to participate in the spiritual favours enjoyed by the loyal clients of the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary. The Dominicans were now recognised in the Church as a Mendicant Order, having renounced all personal possessions and relying on the charity of the Faithful for the means of subsistence.

Of the eight Provinces then erected, the various foundations made both in England and in Ireland formed but one; although in the latter country the Friars Preachers were numerous even during the life-time of St. Dominic himself, or, certainly, very soon after his death. Indeed, some writers assert that several of the Irish monasteries were, as a matter of fact, founded at the Saint's own request. However, it was only towards the end of the fifteenth century (A.D. 1484), that the first Irish Province of the Order was established independent of that of England: the occasion being seized by the Superiors for the introduction of a Reform into the different friaries. As in the case of the Cistercians, and other Religious Orders, the circumstances of the times had prevented the Dominicans living up to their Rule in all its primitive austerity.[1]

On their first coming to Ireland in the year 1224, the sons of St. Dominic were given an abbey in DUBLIN,[2] which had been originally built by the Earl of Pembroke for monks of the Order of Citeaux. The site of this monastery is now occupied by the Four Courts. It is recorded in the "Annals of Ireland," that a number of religious institutions were established all over the country about the same time, notwithstanding the fierce wars then being waged in consequence of the callous efforts made by the Anglo-Norman adventurers to deprive the native chieftains of their territories.[3] In acknowledgment of their indebtedness to the Cistercians, the Dominican community of Dublin had agreed to light a taper in St. Mary's Abbey every year at Christmas. The friary was dedicated to St. Saviour in the year 1238; and in 1304 we read that it was

[1] "*Hibernia Dominicana*" (De Burgo. This author's name is more generally written in the anglicized form—Burke), pp. 74-76, *sq.*—"*Histoire du Clergé*," vol. iii., pp. 8-20.

[2] Burke, p. 187, *sq.*

[3] "The Kingdom of Ireland" (Walpole), p. xv.

DOMINICAN FRIARY, KILMALLOCK. (p. 153.)

destroyed by fire, together with a great part of the city; but it was speedily rebuilt—special mention being made of the Mayor's great generosity to the Dominicans. This benefactor was John le Decer, the first to hold the office of Chief Magistrate after Dublin had been constituted a corporate city by King Edward the Second, A.D. 1308. An interesting custom arose, at a very early date, which the Mayor and Municipal Council were most particular in observing: to visit the Dominican friary, in procession, after their election each year; and there receive Holy Communion; one of the priests, also, being appointed to preach before them on the duties of those charged with the temporal welfare of the city—explaining how they should be held responsible to God for any abuse of their authority. The Dominican church and monastery were again burned down in the year 1316; but this time the citizens themselves wrought the work of destruction, using the materials of the monastic buildings to repair the city walls on the approach of the army of Edward Bruce. Reparation was made, however, as soon as the panic caused by the advent of the Scottish troops had ceased; and both church and friary were restored to their former state.

Many of the members of the community of St. Saviour's were distinguished sons of St. Dominic; several of them being raised to the Archiepiscopal See of Dublin. And the Annals of the Order record what efforts were made by the religious there for the welfare of the Irish Church, and to forward education in Ireland. The Dominican School for Philosophy and Divinity was opened on Usher's Island in the year 1428, and dedicated to St. Thomas of Aquin—the glorious Angelic Doctor. For the greater convenience of the students attending lectures there, the friars built a "splendid bridge" over the river, Burke assuring us that in his own childhood

he had seen the very font from which a lay-brother —in charge of the Toll—used to sprinkle those passing over with holy water. Later on, A.D. 1475, the members of the four Mendicant Orders—the Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Augustinians—obtained a Brief from Pope Sixtus IV. to establish a University in the city of Dublin, hoping to perfect the plan of Archbishop Alexander de Bicknor, who had secured the sanction of Pope John XXII. for a like undertaking more than a century and a-half previously, A.D. 1320. (Indeed, his predecessor, John Lech, had procured a Bull for the same purpose from Pope Clement V. in the year 1311.)[4] But even as the enterprise of that zealous Prelate had failed for want of the needful funds; so, in after years, were the friars of Dublin unable to complete their most praiseworthy project before the suppression of the Irish monasteries.[5] Two Dominicans of the Dublin community suffered death for their Faith and Profession during the Puritan persecution: Father Peter Higgins, slain in 1642 (and apparently not to be identified with the prior of the friary at Naas, another of our Irish Confessors of the same year); and Father Raymond Moore, who died in prison, A.D. 1665.[6]

The next foundation made for the Friars Preachers in Ireland was at DROGHEDA,[7] county Louth; this house also dated from the year 1224. It owed its origin to Luke Netterville, Archbishop of Armagh, and was dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, to whom the pious founder had great devotion. The remaining records of this monastery contain many an interesting episode, illustrating the civil as well as the ecclesiastical history of Drogheda; to which, however, we may only make passing allusion here. Archbishop Netterville died a few years

[4] "Historical Collections," p. 248. See Ware's "Antiquities," ch. xv.
[5] Burke, pp. 190-194. [6] "Our Martyrs," pp. 271-363.
[7] Burke p. 198.

after the completion of the Dominican church and friary, his remains being interred within the precincts of the sacred edifice with great solemnity. At least eight of his successors were chosen from among the sons of St. Dominic : Walter Joyce, amongst others, who was brother of Cardinal Thomas Joyce—a student with St. Thomas of Aquin under Blessed Albert the Great. Various indulgences were granted by Pope Boniface IX., in 1399 and again in 1401, to those visiting the Dominican church at Drogheda—the grand privilege of the "Portiunculla" being one of the favours then bestowed.

We are further assured that when a fierce strife had arisen between the inhabitants of the quarters of the city lying in different counties—each faction contending for practically distinctive civic rights—the riot could only be quelled by an eloquent Dominican friar named Philip Bennet, who invited the leaders of all parties to a special sermon preached in the church of St. Peter, A.D. 1412. Taking for his text the beautiful words : "Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. cxxxii. 1),—he succeeded in so impressing his audience, that an Alderman, who had most adherents in the dispute, called out in the name of all saying that the citizens of Drogheda desired earnestly to live thenceforward in Christian peace. And steps were immediately taken to obtain a charter from Parliament, whereby all the inhabitants should become united under the jurisdiction of one Chief Magistrate, elected to office by the suffrages of the people's representatives. The very first chosen for this dignity was William Symcock—the man who, despite his personal feelings, had thus spoken publicly in the interests of fraternal union and peace.

In the year 1484, the strict observance of the Dominican Rule was enforced in the friary at Drogheda with the

sanction of the General Chapter of the Order held in Rome. But this Reform merely implied the discontinuance of such dispensations as had been granted to the Friars Preachers owing to the exigencies of the times; and rather afford a proof of the zeal of the Irish Dominicans in the exercise of their vocation. We may remark, in passing, that some ten years later, A.D. 1494, Sir Edward Poyning's notorious Bill was framed in a Parliament convened at Drogheda—the effect of which was to render null any measure adopted by the Irish Government, unless the consent of the English ministers had previously been obtained; to this, as one of the chief causes, might be traced the political troubles of the following century. In the after history of the Dominicans of Drogheda, it is recorded that the Cromwellian soldiers beheaded two members of the Order in that city in the year 1649: Fathers Dominic Dillon and Richard Oveton, the latter having been sometime prior of the friary at Athy.[8]

The Dominican friary of KILKENNY,[9] was a splendid edifice built by William Mareschal, Earl of Pembroke, in honour of the Blessed Trinity (A.D. 1225). When the founder died in 1231, his remains were interred within the choir of the church adjoining the "Black Abbey," as this and other monasteries of the different Mendicant Orders were called—the title of "Abbey" being always held in loving esteem and reverence by the Irish people. A member of this community, Hugh by name, was elected Bishop of Ossory in 1259; several other Dominicans governed the same See in the course of time; while quite a number of renowned sons of St. Dominic once dwelt in the friary at Kilkenny. The history of the Black Abbey, even after its suppression in the time of King Henry VIII., is full of facts of vivid

[8] Burke, p. 203. "Our Martyrs," p. 310. Walsh, p. 544.
[9] Burke, p. 204.

interest, especially during the epoch of the Catholic Confederation. For the Friars Preachers had then regained possession of this monastery, as well as of many others seized by the royal agents in the previous century; but, of course, they were driven thence again when Cromwell came to Ireland.

The superior elected at the Dominican Chapter, held in Kilkenny, A.D. 1643, was afterwards appointed Bishop of Emly: the Martyr Prelate, Terence Albert O'Brien. Having seized the city of Limerick, Ireton tried every means, both threats and bribes, to induce this heroic Confessor to deceive the people and deny his Faith. Not alone did the saintly Bishop reject these base offers with scorn; but warned Ireton that he himself should speedily appear before the judgment-seat of God to answer for his crimes: a prophecy fulfilled very soon after the Confessor's cruel death (A.D. 1651).[10]

According to the Dominican annalists, there was a friary of the Order at THOMASTOWN,[11] in the county Kilkenny, of which, however, nothing is known beyond the fact of its existence being alluded to in an official document; and of St. Dominic being mentioned as its Patron. The same authorities speak of a Dominican novitiate at a place called THORNBACK,[12] not far from Kilkenny and dependent upon the Black Abbey. There was another house of the Friars Preachers at ROSSBERCON,[13] in the same county, dating from the year 1267, and built by the families of Grace and Walsh, in honour of Our Lady's Assumption—the only record of this monastery that has come down to us.

St. Saviour's friary, WATERFORD,[14]—also popularly known as the "Black Abbey"—owed its origin to the citizens themselves, who presented it to the Dominicans, A.D. 1226. The Provincial Chapters were held here

[10] "Our Martyrs," p. 330. [11] Burke, p. 337. [12] Ibidem, p. 206.
[13] Burke, p. 270. [14] Ibidem, p. 207.

from time to time ; and it is probable that the Dominican Bishops, who governed the Sees of Waterford and Lismore, had been members of the community of St. Saviour's. A renowned writer of the Order, who flourished sometime in the thirteenth century, was also a conventual of this friary : he was called " Godfry of Waterford." Henry IV. appears to have been one of its benefactors at the beginning of the fifteenth century ; another English monarch of the same name—King Henry VIII.—plundered the same monastery to reward the apostacy of his favourites. One of the Dominicans to die for the Faith in the year 1650 was Father James O'Reilly—a poet and great preacher—who during the course of his zealous career had lived for a while in the ancient friary of his Order at Waterford.

King Donagh Carbreagh O'Brien was founder of a Dominican monastery in the city of LIMERICK ;[15] it was built in the year 1227, and like many houses of the same Order in Ireland was dedicated to St. Saviour. The pious monarch died in 1241, and was interred in the Dominican Church ; there, too, were deposited the remains of seven Bishops who had departed this life between the years 1250 and 1321. The strict observance was introduced into this house about the year 1504 ; and from 1522 a member of the community—Father John Quinn—governed the diocese of Limerick. In 1651 Father James Wolf—a Dominican—was publicly hanged in the city of Limerick, because of his zeal in preaching the true Faith. It seems that there was a vicariate of the Order, dependent on the Limerick monastery, at SIX-MILE-BRIDGE,[16] county Clare ; and at BALLYNEGALL[17], county Limerick, the representatives of the Clan-Dillon family established a house for the Friars Preachers early in the fourteenth century. Gilbert, son of Lord Offaley, founded a Dominican

[15] Ibidem, p. 209.

friary at KILMALLOCK,[18] in the same county, A.D. 1291. Father Gerald Fitzgerald and Brother David Fox—members of this community—were slain by the heretics as they both knelt before the High Altar in prayer, A.D. 1648; while in 1691, Father Gerald Fitzgibbon—subprior of Kilmallock—laid down his life at Listowel in the same glorious cause, his name being the last that occurs on one of the lists of our Irish Confessors of the Faith.[19]

The Dominican friary of "St. Mary's of the Isle," in CORK,[20] dated from the year 1229, a pious man named Philip Barry being the founder. One of the religious of this house, Philip de Slane, was appointed Bishop of Cork in 1321; a few years later King Edward II. sent him upon an important mission to Pope John XXII., acknowledging the Prelate's success on that occasion by making him a Privy Councillor after his return to Ireland. This Bishop's death occurred in the year 1326. At the instance of the Provincial, Father Maurice Maral, the community adopted the strict observance towards the end of the fifteenth century. After the Suppression, a Protestant Bishop publicly burned—to the great grief of the now helpless Catholics of Cork—the statue of St. Dominic long piously venerated at St. Mary's of the Isle. In a subsequent persecution a member of the same community, Father Aeneas O'Cahil, shed his blood for the Faith (A.D. 1651). The Friars Preachers had another foundation in the county Cork at a place called GLANORE,[21] the Roches being the principal benefactors of the community there. It probably dated from sometime in the thirteenth century, and was under the invocation of the Holy Cross. Not far from this friary was St. Dominic's well, much frequented by the people on the 4th of August—the feast of the Saint—each year. The Dominican monastery of

[16] [17] [18] Burke, pp. 213, 340, 284.
[19] "Our Martyrs," p. 373.
[20] Burke, p. 214.
[21] Burke, p. 333.

YOUGHAL,[22] also,—built by Thomas, Lord Offaley (A.D. 1268),—was first dedicated to the Holy Cross; but it afterwards became known as "St. Mary's of the Favours," because of the many extraordinary graces obtained there through Our Lady's intercession. At a General Chapter of the Order held in Rome, A.D. 1644, special mention was made of a statue of the Blessed Virgin, venerated in the Dominican church at Youghal from the remotest times. The names of several Friars Preachers appear among those of the Bishops of Cloyne; one of these distinguished sons of St. Dominic was eventually translated to the Archiepiscopal See of Cashel, in the course of the thirteenth century. Provincial Chapters assembled in Youghal on various occasions, at one of which meetings we find particular allusion made to the generosity of a pious man named Robert Percival, who died in the year 1303. In 1493 the strict observance was adopted by this community at the command of Father Bartholomew de Comatio, General of the Order. The monastic buildings and eleven houses belonging to the friars in the town of Youghal were granted to a William Walsh during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It appears quite certain that the Dominicans, as well as the Carmelites and the Franciscans, had a friary at CASTLELYONS,[23] in the county Cork (A.D. 1307). But nothing is known concerning this monastery, except that it was an edifying proof of John de Barry's devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

It was in honour of Our Lady's Assumption that the Nugent family built a friary for the Dominicans in the year 1237 at MULLINGAR,[24] county Westmeath.

[22] Ibidem, pp. 271, 115.

[23] Burke, p. 290 (Ware, Harris and Alemand are very frequently quoted by the author of "*Hibernia Dominicana*").

[24] Ibidem, p. 217. "Our Martyrs," p. 291. According to Walsh, there were also Dominican friaries at ATHNECARNE and at TOBER, in the county of Westmeath (pp. 689, 700).

From time to time the Provincial Chapters were held there; and mention is made of one of the religious who had been taken thence to govern the ancient See of Clonmacnoise. During the Puritan persecution, the prior of this monastery—Father Stephen Pettit—was shot by the heretics while in the very act of hearing the confession of a penitent soldier; a Dominican lay-brother, named Cormac Egan, likewise suffered death for the Faith about the same time.

Next, in the order observed by Burke, comes a famous Dominican friary in the county Galway, known as the Abbey of ATHENRY.[25] Once the second city of Connaught, Athenry is now a small country town. But even at the present day there are traces of its former greatness well worthy of a visit—its historic ruins comprising the picturesque remains of the monastery of Friars Preachers; part of the ancient Franciscan church; the old city walls with crumbling towers; and a castle said to have been built for King John, who, probably, held his court there when the place was one of the fashionable resorts of the Kingdom. The founder of the Dominican friary was Meyler de Bermingham, the second Lord Athenry, which title gave him the right of precedence among the Barons of Ireland. Its heavenly Patrons were the Apostles Saints Peter and Paul; and 1241 is the year assigned for its establishment. Some say that the founder's father had received letters from St. Dominic himself requesting him to build this friary, but that he was prevented doing so by the frequent wars of the times; and hence it became his son's privilege to carry out the Saint's wishes later on. This Meyler de Bermingham died in the year 1252, and was interred in the church of the friary, which also contains the tombs of many renowned men. One of these was Florence MacFlynne, Archbishop of Tuam, whose death

[25] Burke, p. 220, *sq.* Lewis, vol. i., p. 82, *sq.*

occurred in 1256. He had bestowed large donations on the Dominicans of Athenry for educational purposes; and had always taken a deep interest in the welfare of these Friars. Thomas O'Kelly, Bishop of Clonfert, who died in 1263, was another benefactor of the same monastery; as were, likewise, many of the Bishops and members of the various families laid to rest within the cloister there in the course of time.

A short distance from the Dominican friary was fought the fateful battle of Athenry, between the English and the Irish—led by Feidhlim O'Connor, the last of his illustrious line to rule in Connaught as king; and he was among those slain that day (A.D. 1316).

Pope Boniface IX. granted an Indulgence to those who should visit the church of the Friars Preachers at Athenry (A.D. 1400); and when the monastic buildings had been accidentally destroyed by fire in the year 1423, Pope Martin V. bestowed a similar favour on all who made offerings for the purpose of restoring the sacred edifice: a privilege confirmed by Pope Eugene IV. in 1445, the community then numbering about thirty religious. It is recorded that four Dominican Archbishops governed the See of St. Jarlath—Athenry being in the Archdiocese of Tuam; while, in after years, as many as seventeen conventuals of the friary of Saints Peter and Paul either died for the Faith, or were otherwise distinguished for their zeal and holiness. Father Gerald Dillon was one of the heroic Confessors, members of this community for a time; he did not survive the hardships which he had to endure when in prison in the cause of Truth, A.D. 1651. The learned Father James O'Cullan, also; he secured the Martyr's crown the following year; and, probably, two saintly lay-brothers slain by the heretics in some part of Connaught (A.D. 1651): Donagh and James Moran. Although suppressed during the reign of King Henry VIII., and still more thoroughly dismantled by the

Cromwellian vandals, the ruined church and friary presented an imposing appearance even towards the end of the eighteenth century. But the walls of the monastery were eventually pulled down, the stones being used in the building of a barrack for soldiers close by: the scene—as the author has been assured by an eye-witness—of many of those horrors so frequent throughout the country during the dread year of 1798. That most unsightly building has been, in turn, replaced by a range of cottages, allowing a much better view of the ruins of the beautiful church, which will inspire many another generation of the Irish Faithful with proud and loving memories of the glory of our Western Thebaid.

In the county Galway also, and, indeed, dependent on the friary of Athenry, was the Dominican vicariate of KILCORBAN,[26] situated in the diocese of Clonfert. There had been, from a very early date, a church in the same place dedicated to St. Corban (A.D. 500); but in the year 1444, the sacred edifice was granted to the members of the Third Order of St. Dominic and placed under the invocation of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, the sanction of Pope Eugene IV. having previously been obtained. A miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin was preserved there, an object of pious veneration to the people of the surrounding districts. The friary of St. Patrick at TOMBEOLA,[27] in the same county, was also subject to the Dominican community at Athenry. Built by the O'Flaherty in 1427, rarely more than eight friars resided there. After its suppression in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the materials were removed to erect a castle in the vicinity; still we find that the zealous Friars Preachers continued to labour in the same district until the Cromwellian persecution.

We have already alluded to the Dominican monastery

[26] Burke, pp. 234, 342, *sq.* [27] [28] [29] Burke, pp. 307, 323, 303.

in the city of GALWAY,[28] known as "St. Mary's of the Hill," first established for a community of Norbertines from the abbey of that Order at Tuam. It was at the petition of the citizens themselves that Pope Innocent VIII. granted this house to the Friars Preachers of Athenry (A.D. 1488). Among its more generous benefactors is mentioned the famous James Lynch FitzStephen, who built the choir of the church. When Mayor of the city in 1493 he would not spare his own son, found guilty of the crime of murder: so just was that father, and loyal to the office which he held. In the year 1570 Queen Elizabeth bestowed the monastery and its possessions upon certain apostate citizens of Galway.

The friary of PORTUMNA,[29] in the county Galway, occupied the site of a Cistercian cell, which the Dominicans received in 1426 with the approval of the different Superiors-General, and the necessary Papal sanction. Through the munificence of the O'Madden, they were enabled to build a splendid church and monastery there, placing the same under the protection of Our Lady and Saints Peter and Paul. Pope Martin V. confirmed the gift, and granted, moreover, a special Indulgence to all who should further help in forwarding the good work. Several Dominicans were Bishops of Clonfert, to which diocese Portumna belongs; and it is probable that they were members of the same community.

Not alone was the friary at CASHEL [30] the principal foundation of the Order in the county Tipperary; but it is said to have been one of the very grandest Dominican monasteries in Ireland. It owed its origin—A.D. 1243—to David MacKelly, the Dominican Archbishop of Cashel. St. Dominic was its Patron; and the first community came from the friary of St. Mary's of the Isle, at Cork. Important Chapters of the Order were held at Cashel A.D. 1289; and again in 1307; but in 1480 both church

[28] [29] [30] [31] Burke, pp. 235 328.

and friary were burned down by accident. The buildings were soon perfectly restored by John Cantwell, the then Archbishop of Cashel, at his own expense; for which reason the Dominicans ever afterwards regarded him as the founder of this house; and as such gave him a first place in the pious suffrages of their various communities throughout Ireland. This monastery was suppressed by Henry VIII., but the Friars Preachers regained possession during the reign of Charles I., making it serve the purpose of one of the colleges of the Order. Father Richard Barry, a celebrated orator slain by the heretics in 1647, was sometime prior of this community. The Dominicans had also a friary at CLONMEL,[31] in the same county. Dedicated to St. Dominic, A.D. 1269, a community of his Order was still to be found there in the seventeenth century; two of the religious, at least, being among our Irish Confessors of the Faith: Fathers Myler Magrath and Thomas O'Higgin—both hanged at Clonmel in the year 1651. The Friars Preachers of LORRAH,[32] county Tipperary, were indebted for that foundation to the generosity of Walter de Burgh (A.D. 1269). This house was dedicated to Saint Peter, a recently canonized Martyr of the Order of St. Dominic. A community had been enabled to dwell there again even after the Suppression; for at a Chapter held in Lorrah, in the year 1688, as many as a hundred and fifty friars were present: a very small number, probably, compared to that Chapter which had assembled in the same place A.D. 1301.

The year 1243 is assigned for the opening of the Dominican monastery of Holy Cross at TRALEE,[33] in the county Kerry; Lord John FitzGerald, fourth Baron of Offaley, being the chief benefactor of this community. He and his son Maurice were both slain in the battle of Callin, A.D. 1261. One of the religious of this house in after years was Father Daniel O'Daly—the renowned

[32] [33] Burke, pp. 274, 237. "Our Martyrs," p. 353.

'Friar Dominic of the Rosary," who founded the monastery of *Corpo Santo* in Lisbon (A.D. 1659). Mention is made of two Dominican Bishops appointed to the See of Kerry: one named Christian (A.D. 1256), the other (A.D. 1341) Edward de Caermarthen. The prior of Tralee in 1653 was Father Tadhg Moriarty, who died for the Faith at Killarney.

It is not known for certain who founded the Dominican friary at NEWTOWN,[34] county Down; the more probable opinion assigns the merit of this work of piety to Walter de Burgh, Earl of Ulster (A.D. 1244). St. Columba was chosen as its Patron; and it appears that the monastic buildings were so splendid as to elicit the admiration of the Fathers assembled in Chapter there in the year 1298; and again in 1312. Several members of the Order were raised to the Episcopate as Bishops of Down and Connor; and may have been members of the Newtown community.

At GOLA,[35] in the county Fermanagh, the MacManus built a monastery for the Friars Preachers in honour of Our Lady's Nativity. His son, John, also took a keen interest in this pious work; for he himself had been educated by the Dominicans of Athenry—sometime in the thirteenth century, probably—and was anxious that his native place should benefit by the zeal and learning of the sons of St. Dominic.

In the county Derry, there was a friary belonging to the same Order at COLERAINE,[36] on the river Bann. It dated from the year 1244, some attributing its origin to the MacEvelyns; others to the O'Cane family. The Blessed Virgin was the Patroness; and her statue was devoutly venerated here, until the year 1611, when the Protestant Bishop Babington tried to have it burned; but he was suddenly seized by a malady of which he died most miserably. This was one of the communities that

[34] [35] Burke, pp. 241, 330.

[36] Burke, p. 243.

adopted the strict observance in the year 1484. Two religious of the same monastery were raised to the Episcopate; and in later times, A.D. 1654, the prior, Father John O'Flaverly, and another Dominican named Father James O'Reilly were stoned to death because of their loyalty in the cause of Truth. In alluding to this foundation, Burke speaks of the difficulty of furnishing anything like a complete history of the monastic institutions of Ireland; seeing how the persecuted monks and friars could not possibly preserve their archives and libraries at the time of the terrible Suppression: a sad fact which many other writers have had occasion to deplore. O'Donnell, Prince of Tyrconnell, was founder of the great friary which the Dominicans had at DERRY [37]—A.D. 1274. There were usually a hundred and fifty religious there, many of them renowned for their wonderful holiness. The author of "Hibernia Dominicana" alludes to two Bishops of the Order who had been appointed to the See of Derry; although their names are not mentioned by Ware. This monastery was utterly destroyed at the siege of Derry in the time of King James (A.D. 1689). At the beginning of the same century, A.D. 1608, Father John Olvin, a member of this community, was put to death by the heretics; a little later on his brother Donough—also a conventual of this house—and several members of the secular clergy shared his glorious fate; while in 1633 another heroic son of St. Dominic (Father Arthur MacGeoghegan) was arrested in London when on his way back to Ireland from Lisbon, and executed in that city on the evidence of notoriously perjured witnesses.[38]

The most important of the Dominican friaries in the county SLIGO was the foundation made in the town of

[37] Burke, p. 281.

[38] "A History of the English Mission of Discalced Carmelites" (Father B. Zimmerman, O.D.C., London, 1899), pp. 45-48.

that name.[39] Erected in the year 1252 by Maurice FitzGerald, and dedicated to the Holy Cross, this monastery became the scene of the labours of many distinguished members of the Order in the course of time. The O'Connors of Sligo, and Pierce O'Timony were among its most generous benefactors. It is interesting to recall that amid the pressing cares that weighed upon him during the Council of Constance, Pope John XXIII. issued a Decree, granting an Indulgence to all who should assist in the restoration of the Dominican church and friary at Sligo, accidentally destroyed by fire (A.D. 1414). Both were rebuilt in 1416 by Father Bryan MacDermot MacDonagh; and, notwithstanding the "thorough uprooting" of the Irish monasteries in subsequent times, the ruins still remaining testify to this friar's zeal, and afford evidence of the magnificence of the original buildings. Pope Innocent VIII. granted a special Bull in the year 1488, authorizing another member of the MacDonagh family to found a monastery for the Friars Preachers at CLOONYMEAGHAN,[40] in the same county, in honour of St. Dominic; but making it subject to the community at Sligo. The Dominicans had, likewise, a house at KNOCKMORE,[41] county Sligo; although Burke himself seems inclined to identify this foundation with the friary which the O'Gara established in the same place for the Carmelites sometime during the fourteenth century. In this county, moreover, was the friary of BALLINDUNE,[42] founded in the year 1427 by the joint efforts of the Dominicans of Athenry and the MacDonagh family in order to increase devotion to Our Blessed Lady.

Originally intended for the Order of St. Francis, the friary of STRADE,[43] county Mayo, was occupied by a community of Dominicans from the year 1252. It was dedicated to the Holy Cross; and is said to have been

[39] [40] [41] Burke, pp, 246, 326, 344.

a spacious edifice: Jordan de Exeter—the husband of Basilia, daughter of Meyler de Bermingham of Athenry—being a generous benefactor to the friars there. This monastery, also, was burned down early in the fifteenth century. In 1434 we find Pope Eugene IV. granting an Indulgence to all who should help the community to restore the buildings. About the year 1469 Richard de Burgo, of Turlough, and Lord William Oughter founded a house for the Friars Preachers at BURISHOOLE,[44] county Mayo, in honour of the Blessed Virgin. Dominican writers, however, assign 1486 as the date of its establishment, when Pope Innocent VIII. rectified some informalities connected with the granting of the monastic property to the community. Honoria Burke and Honoria Magaen—who were members of the Third Order of St. Dominic—dwelt in a house built by the former near the friary of Burishoole, until they died in the year 1653 from the hardships which the Puritans caused them to suffer; their remains were interred amid the ruins of the Dominican friary. The monastery of RATHBRAN,[45] established for the Order of St. Dominic by Sir William Burke, surnamed "The Grey,"—Lord Justice of Ireland in 1274—was also in the same county. In later times it must have been used as a novitiate by the Irish Dominicans; for Father Hugh MacGoil, who died for the Faith at Waterford in 1654, is said to have held the office of Master of novices there: a Father Walter Fleming was another member of this community put to death by the heretics about the same time. But it seems that the general novitiate for the province of Connaught was originally the friary of URLARE,[46] county Mayo, built by the Nangle family in the year 1434—at least it was then the Dominicans obtained formal permission from Pope Boniface VIII. to avail themselves of their benefactors' generosity. Indeed postulants were sent to

[42] [43] [44] Burke, pp. 249, 317, 279.

Urlare from all parts of Ireland; the solitude of the place being one of the features that rendered it so desirable as an abode for those entering on the way of religious perfection. Community life was, as we have seen, resumed there after the Restoration; but later on several of the friars, according to Burke, were slain by the heretics in hatred of their holy profession: among them the prior, Father Dominic Dillon, who, as already explained, received his glorious Crown at Drogheda.

There was certainly a Dominican monastery at ATHY[47] in the county Kildare; although not a trace of the ruins remained even when Burke wrote his history of the Order in Ireland. This foundation dated from the year 1253, owing its origin to the Wogans and Boiselles (or Boyle), who had undertaken the great work of piety in honour of St. Dominic. Important Chapters were held here in 1288; in 1295; and again early in the following century. At NAAS,[48] in the same county, a Dominican friary was founded by the Eustace family, A.D. 1356, and placed under the invocation of the Martyr, St. Eustachius, with whom they claimed kindred. There were two members of the Order Bishops of Kildare: Peter Stoll, in the year 1529; and Rock McGeoghegan in 1640. In the following year, A.D. 1641, the prior of Naas, the saintly Father Peter O'Higgin—a very distinguished preacher—laid down his life for the Faith.

There were five houses of the Friars Preachers in the county ROSCOMMON,[49] the monastery in the town of this name being, by all accounts, the most important. It was established by Phelim O'Connor, King of Connaught, in the year 1253, as an act of homage to Our Lady. This pious monarch died in 1265, and was buried in the church of the Roscommon friary. The buildings were much injured by lightning in 1308; and during the wars of the fifteenth century were almost totally destroyed.

[45] [46] [47] Burke, pp. 311, 254. Compare Lewis, vol. i. p. 90.

Hence, to this community, likewise, Pope Eugene IV. granted a great privilege by bestowing an Indulgence on the good work of forwarding the repair of both church and monastery (A.D. 1445). Not a few of the Bishops of Elphin were zealous sons of St. Dominic; and at least three of our Irish Confessors were conventuals of the friary at Roscommon: Father Raymond Keoghy, killed by the heretics in 1642; Brother Donald O'Meaghen in 1648; and another lay-brother named Bernard O'Kelly, who died in Galway in the year 1654. Burke alludes to several "vicariates" dependent upon this house; but furnishes no information concerning them. The foundation made for the same Order at TOWEMONIA,[50] county Roscommon, was also due to the piety of the O'Connor family; it was handed over to the Franciscan tertiaries sometime before the Suppression. The MacDermot Roe was founder of the friary of CLONSHANVIL,[51] which occupied the site of the ancient abbey of St. Connedus, and was dedicated to the Holy Cross (A.D. 1385). Many illustrious Dominicans bore the name of MacDermot—the prior of Clonshanvil in 1698 being lineally descended from the first benefactor of that monastery; and was one of those who had the glory of suffering exile for the Faith that same year. Probably the friary of KNOCKVICAR[52] also belonged to the Dominicans, having, according to some writers, been built for the Order by the Bingham family. Close to that hill in the county Roscommon whereon the Kings of Connaught were proclaimed, may still be seen the picturesque remains of the monastery built by the MacDowels for the Friars Preachers, in 1448, at a place called TULSK,[53] and piously dedicated to St. Patrick.

The friary of TRIM[54] appears to have been the only foundation made for the Dominicans in the county

[48] [49] [50] Burke, pp. 293, 257, 346.
[51] Burke, pp. 295.
[52] Alemand, p. 218. Burke. p. 345.
[53] [54] Burke, pp. 314, 262.

Meath (A.D. 1263). It was erected, in honour of Our Lady's Assumption, by Geoffrey de Grenville, Lord of Meath, who himself took the habit of the Order towards the close of his career; his death occurring in the year 1314. A Synod was convened in this monastery in 1291 to further the interests of the Irish Church. Chapters of the Order, also, were held there frequently; and it is said that even Parliament assembled in the great hall on several occasions. The church was destroyed by fire in 1368; but seems to have been speedily restored. Without entering into details, the annalists assure us that the lives and works of many members of this community were such as to enhance the glory of the Order of St. Dominic.

The origin of the Dominican friary of Holy Cross at ARKLOW,[55] county Wicklow, was primarily due to the generosity of Theobald FitzWalter, a member of the Butler family (A.D. 1264). A monument was erected to his memory in the adjoining church, the place of his burial in the year 1285. This was one of the Irish monastic establishments which Pope John XXIII. assisted, A.D. 1414, by granting a special Indulgence—to be obtained on certain Festivals by all who should contribute towards the preservation of the buildings.

In the town of CAVAN,[56] the O'Reilly, Dynast of Breffny, proved his devotion to the Blessed Virgin by erecting a monastery there, in her honour, for the Friars Preachers (A.D. 1300). But nearly a century later, A.D. 1393, we find the representatives of the same family instrumental in having the Dominicans replaced by a community of the Order of St. Francis; no reason being assigned by historians for this change. However, the sons of St. Dominic appear to have made another foundation in Cavan eventually; for we are told that several members of the Order laboured there most successfully during the

[55] [56] Burke, pp. 265, 285.

Penal Days. It is of interest to note that in the friary originally intended for the Dominicans were laid the remains of Owen Roe O'Neill after his base assassination at Cloughouter (Co. Cavan) in the year 1649.

Hardly anything is known concerning the friary founded for the Dominicans by Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, at CARLINGFORD,[57] county Louth, and dedicated to St. Malachy of Armagh. Yet it is said to have been regarded as a house of much importance in the Order.

There was a foundation of the same Order at AGHABOE,[58] in the Queen's County, dating from the thirteenth century, and being the fruit of the piety of the FitzGerald family. It occupied a site close to the church built to contain the shrine of St. Canice in 1052: after a cathedral had been dedicated to the same Saint in the city of Kilkenny, the church at Aghaboe was restored for the Friars Preachers; but it seems that both the shrine and the Relics perished at the sack of this town, A.D. 1346.

Cornelius O'Ferrall, Bishop of Ardagh and scion of the noble house of Annally, was founder of the Dominican friary established at Longford,[69] A.D. 1400, in honour of St. Brigid. This pious Prelate died in the year 1424; in 1429 the monastery, in which he had taken such an interest, was burned down; to be rebuilt, however, by the people of Longford, whose zeal in this respect may well be attributed to the action of Popes Martin V. and Eugene IV. granting an Indulgence to all who should take part in the work of restoration. There were several Dominican friars among the Bishops of Ardagh; and a number of distinguished members of the Longford community bore the name of the founder of this friary: Fathers Laurence and Bernard O'Farrell being, in after years, slain in the church there as witnesses to the true Faith (A.D. 1651); a sad reflection when we remember

[57] [58] [59] Burke, pp. 289, 296, 299.

that a non-Catholic place of worship at present occupies the site of St. Brigid's ancient monastery.[60]

It is probable that the Dominicans had a foundation at ARMAGH,[61] also, for which they are supposed to have been indebted to the Primate, Patrick O'Scanlan, himself a member of the Order. He had previously (A.D. 1256) governed the See of Raphoe; and became Archbishop of Armagh in 1261, receiving permission from Pope Alexander IV. to take two of his brethren in Religion to remain with him there. This eminent man died in the year 1270, and was interred in the Dominican church at Drogheda; several other friars being among his successors in the See of Armagh.

The friary of CLONMINES[62] was in the county Wexford; some writers hold that it had at first been intended for the Hermits of St. Augustine, and only passed into the possession of the Dominicans in the fourteenth century; others, however, are inclined to think that both these Orders had each a monastery there from the beginning; but Burke assures us that he himself could find no trace of the friary of his Order in that place. . . . It is probable, moreover, that besides the foundations here enumerated there may have been others of which all record has perished owing to that spirit of vandalism among the heretics so frequently commented upon by the author of the *Hibernia Dominicana*.

Although instituted by the holy Founder of their Order himself, the Dominican nuns do not appear to have had any convents in Ireland before the time of King Henry the Eighth. Burke tells us that they were established both at DROGHEDA[63] and at WATERFORD[64] during that monarch's reign; but of this fact there is no conclusive evidence. Numerous as were the friaries of the different Mendicant Orders founded throughout

[60] Lewis, vol. 1, p. 40. [61] [62] Burke, pp. 338, 340.
[63] [64] [65] Burke, p. 348, *sq.*

the country, few, if any, nunneries belonging to these Orders seem to have been opened in Ireland until the seventeenth century.[65] A fact apparently so strange—considering how many Irishwomen devoted their virginity to God in every age, sometimes even living in community according to the mode of life practised by the Canonesses of St. Augustine—may be easily explained, once we recall the almost incessant wars waged between the English and Irish from the time of the Anglo-Norman invasion. Hence, it is chiefly from the reign of Charles I. we find more frequent allusion made to the foundation of convents for nuns of the Mendicant Orders; especially, between the years 1642 and 1649, during which epoch the Dominicans were again very numerous in Ireland.[66]

[66] Ibidem, p. 116.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS.

THE existence of the Franciscan Order has been, from the beginning, a striking protest against the spirit of the world. Dispensing absolutely with the means deemed most necessary, from a mere human point of view, to further man's welfare upon earth, the members of this Institute have achieved triumphs of true Christian philanthropy which fill even those who would condemn their method of life with wondering awe. Poverty of the most rigid kind, according to the Gospel counsels, was chosen by the Seraphic Founder of the Order as the basis of the spiritual structure of sanctity he would rear in the Church ; by Poverty, too, has been wrought that stupendous miracle of his victory, which is as evident as ever in the results the Saint had hoped and prayed for—now after upwards of seven hundred years.

Born at Assisi, in the Province of Perugia, A.D. 1181, St. Francis embraced this life of extraordinary poverty about the time he had attained his twenty-fifth year, and when called to his reward (A.D. 1226),—bearing the Sacred Stigmata in his body as a proof of his favour before God—he had accomplished the task given him to do ; the fruits of which are shown forth in the ever-widening influences of the great Order that bears his name. But he did not attempt this crusade of Holy Poverty until he had passed several years in a little cottage near Assisi, practising the severest penances, and devoting himself entirely to contemplative prayer.

RUINS OF THE FRANCISCAN FRIARY, ENNIS. (p. 187.)

Then, drawn to him by his great holiness of life, some pious young men joined him there (A.D. 1209); and soon his humble dwelling became altogether too small for even the simple wants of those seeking the Saint's guidance in the spiritual way. Edified by the earnestness of these fervent youths, the Benedictines of Soubazo gave them a little oratory, dedicated to Our Lady of the Angels, which was on their estate at a place called Portiunculla. However, St. Francis would only occupy it on condition that his benefactors should accept, once a year, a basket of fish from the stream close by instead of the usual rent; for he was determined to possess absolutely nothing in this world; nor would he and his disciples on any account so much as touch money.

St. Francis went to Rome in 1210 to obtain the Pope's blessing on the enterprise now clearly defined before his mind—the establishment of a Religious Order, whose members should strive after perfection by the most rigid exercise of Evangelical Poverty. He was destined to meet with a very keen and mortifying disappointment at the outset, which he endured, however, as became a saint. Innocent III. declined to confirm the rule of life which the recluse of Assisi had framed for those desiring to become his followers: it seemed so far beyond the strength of human nature to suffer such painful restraints. But grace remained to be considered; and having been admonished in a vision, which revealed St. Francis supporting the Latern Basilica on his shoulders, the Pope had him instantly recalled; and now willingly granted his prayer to undertake a work so manifestly blessed by God.

Numbers of eager subjects came to receive the habit of the new Order from the Saint's own hands—the veritable badge of the Poverty which they were required to embrace; and most closely resembling the coarse garb worn by the humblest shepherds in that part

of Italy. Yet it was the selfsame habit which, several centuries afterwards, we find one of our own glorious Confessors of the Faith—Cornelius O'Devany, Bishop of Down and Connor—reserving as his shroud; "far and away more highly prized than the Episcopal Insignia, or any armorial bearings."[1] As early as the year 1212, a young lady of Assisi—now known as St. Clare—came to Portiunculla and implored St. Francis to give her the veil, in order that she might inaugurate the same grand work among women; from her the Sisterhood of "Poor Clares" derives its name. Fully five thousand friars attended the first General Chapter of the Order of St. Francis, held in the year 1219; in 1223, the holy Founder drew up a summary of the Rule which had been confirmed by Pope Honorius III.—a number of its statutes binding on the religious under pain of mortal sin; and from that time the Franciscans became more popularly known as "Friars Minor."[2]

Such the origin of the Order that has given five Popes to the Church; an immense number of Cardinals and Bishops; many learned Doctors, among whom St. Bonaventure and Dun Scotus are shining lights in the Schools; while the glories achieved by the countless other spiritual sons of St. Francis have been recounted by Father Luke Wadding—the renowned Irish Franciscan annalist.[3] There were fifteen hundred monasteries of the Order, and ninety thousand religious in the year 1380, the Franciscan missionaries having already established themselves in the remotest parts of the world. Soon after the death of St. Francis, his successor introduced some relaxations affecting certain very rigorous chapters of the holy Rule; but a Reform

[1] "Our Martyrs," p. 247.

[2] "*Histoire du Clergé*," vol. ii. p. 354 *sq.*—"A Catholic Dictionary," p. 354.

[3] "*Annales Minorum*," from which Alemand, and other writers derive most of their information concerning the Franciscans. The second and better known edition was published in Rome, A.D. 1731-45.

bearing on these identical points followed almost immediately, when the friars who still wished to avail themselves of the dispensations obtained from the Holy See became known as the "Conventual Franciscans;" while those desiring to live up to the Primitive Rule were called "Observantines," or "Cordeliers" throughout France. In the course of time another Reform was introduced among the Franciscans of Spain by John of Guadaloupe, whose followers received the title of "Grey Friars" or "Recollects," (A.D. 1500); and yet another in the year 1526, inaugurated by Matteo de Bassi of Urbino, who did not consider the habit worn by his brethren—the "Observantines,"—to be in strict conformity with that prescribed by St. Francis: the friars in favour of assuming the original long cowl are the "Capuchins."

These various Reforms merely implied a more austere mode of life on the part of those adopting them; but each new Congregation had special statutes of its own whereby the Rule of St. Francis was either interpreted or modified. Then, there were the Tertiaries, or members of the Third Order, whom we also find living in community here in Ireland long before the time of Henry the Eighth. The Capuchins, however, did not come to this country until the seventeenth century. Some say that the Irish Franciscans — Conventual and Observantine—had upwards of a hundred monasteries throughout the several provinces, although not even the names of many of these foundations are at present known. We are, likewise, assured that a companion of St. Francis himself was the first to introduce the Order into Ireland.[4]

Precedence is usually given to the DUBLIN[5] friary; but

[4] Alemand. p. 221 *sq.*

[5] Ibidem, p. 230. Walsh, p. 427.—It is to be regretted that we have very little authentic information concerning the precise sites of a number of ancient monasteries within the city of Dublin.

it seems that there were some foundations of an earlier date. It was through the generosity of Ralph le Porter that the site for this monastery was secured about the year 1235, King Henry III., also, contributing largely towards the expenses of the pious undertaking. Edward I. was another benefactor to the same community (A.D. 1293); and a Mayor of Dublin, named John le Decer, built a beautiful chapel in honour of Our Lady within the adjoining church. After Le Decer's death in 1332, his body was laid to rest beneath the altar which he himself had given to the Blessed Virgin. So great had been this good man's charity, that during a famine in the city he sent three ships to France for corn to be distributed among the poor. The friars of this monastery adopted the Primitive Rule, as followed by the Observantines, in the year 1518; indeed, we may say that the Irish Franciscans generally emulated their fervent example about the same time. Three Franciscan friars had the glory of dying for the Faith in 1588—Fathers John O'Molloy, Cornelius Dogherty, and Geoffrey Ferall: Abbeyleix, in the Queen's County, being the scene of their execution.[6] They may have been members of the Dublin community, from whose home the present Francis Street is said to derive its name.[7]

A great monastery was erected, "on the banks of the Nore," in the city of KILKENNY,[8] for the sons of St. Francis, A.D. 1234. King Henry III., whom the Franciscan annalist calls, "a pious monarch, indeed," was a good benefactor to this house, also; but its origin is, in the first instance, attributed to Richard Mareschal, Earl of Pembroke, whose death occurred that same year, his remains being interred within the cloister. The church does not appear to have been consecrated until

[6] "Our Martyrs," p. 197. [7] Walsh, p. 427.
[8] Alemand, p. 238. "The Irish Franciscan Monasteries" (Meehan), p. 95.

1321 ; the adjoining cemetery ten years later. A terrible plague visited Ireland in 1348, one of its victims being John Clynne, the famous Franciscan annalist—a conventual of the Kilkenny friary. He is said to have kept his records faithfully to the end : " while awaiting death among the dead ; " and doubtful whether " anyone of the race of Adam " could escape the dread pestilence to continue the work which he himself had begun.[9] A pious lady, named Elizabeth Palmer, had died the previous year ; to her the friars were indebted for the building of part of their choir. In 1374 a number of the citizens charged themselves with the keeping of the church in good repair. This sacred edifice was richly adorned with choice works of Art ; while the library of the monastery contained many volumes of great value ; but everything was seized by the agents of King Henry VIII., the monastic lands and buildings being granted to the Corporation of Kilkenny.

On the Westmeath side of the town of ATHLONE[10] another large friary was built for the Franciscans in the year 1240. Father Luke Wadding, the annalist, asserts positively that the " noble Fallons," lords of the territory at the time of the Invasion, were the founders ; and this seems most probable, the names mentioned by other writers being those of principal benefactors : such as Cathal Crovdearg O'Connor and Sir Henry Dillon. The buildings had not yet been completed when the generous Cathal died ; but the latter lived until 1244, three years after the consecration of the beautiful church of the monastery by Albert, Archbishop of Armagh. The great friary of MULTIFERNAN[11] was also in the county Westmeath. It was the gift of William Delamer to St. Francis, A.D. 1304. We are told that the buildings were very spacious ; and comprised the usual library, guest-house, cloister, dormitory,

[9] Ware's " Writers," p. 20. [10] Alemand, p. 244 *sq.* [11] Ibidem, p. 246.

chapter-house, the offices and refectory—the whole forming a quadrangle which included the church. There was always a large community there, each member sanctifying himself by prayer and the practice of the austere Rule: the Observantine Reform being fervently received there in the year 1460. After the Delamers, the Nugents were the most generous benefactors to this house. Some representatives of the latter family even succeeded in purchasing the buildings from the king's favourite after the monastery had been suppressed by Henry the Eighth; and a number of the religious were permitted to remain on there until the reign of Queen Elizabeth, whose soldiers burnt both church and friary to the ground, A.D. 1601. In the meantime—A.D. 1590–1591—three members of the community (Fathers Terence Magennis, Magnus O'Todhry, and Loughlin Oge MacO'Cadha) had gained the Martyr's Crown; they died from the hardships endured in prison for the defence of the Faith.[12] Another friar of Multifernan has left us a most interesting account of that same dread epoch, to which, however, the space at our disposal does not admit of lengthy allusion.[13] There was also a foundation of the Conventual Franciscans at DYSART[14] in the county Westmeath, not far from the town of Mullingar. But the only reference made to it is contained in a record of a lawsuit in which the Guardian of that house was engaged about the year 1331.

The friary at WICKLOW[15] is said to have been the very poorest of the Franciscan monasteries in Ireland. It was established by the O'Tooles and the O'Byrnes in 1252 for a community of the Conventuals; but the Observantine Reform was introduced there in 1436;

[12] "Our Martyrs," p. 199. [13] Meehan, p. 37.

[14] Walsh, p. 692. In the county Westmeath, also, there was a friary of the members of the Third Order of St. Francis at KILLMICHAEL, said to have been founded by the Petyt family.—Walsh, p. 697.

[15] Walsh, p. 720.

the friars being then occupied in the exercise of their missionary duties among the people of the surrounding mountainous districts, and in educating the sons of their benefactors. A Franciscan writer, who visited Wicklow in the year 1615, tells us how grieved he was to find the friary converted into a courthouse—the very church resounding with the profane uproar, wherein formerly voices had been raised only to proclaim the praises of the Most High.

The loss of the records of the Franciscan friary of WEXFORD[16] is attributed to the malice of the apostate, who had been rewarded for his crime by King Henry the Eighth. This house must have been founded as early as the year 1240; although a much later date is usually assigned. The community embraced the Observantine Rule in 1486. It seems that the friars contrived to remain in the neighbourhood after the Suppression; but in 1649 we find seven of their successors among the victims of the awful massacre which took place in the streets of Wexford. These heroic Confessors were Fathers John Esmond, Richard Synnott, Paul Synnott, Raymond Stafford, Peter Stafford; and Brothers Didacus Chevers and James Rochford. Some were slain while in prayer before the Altar; others in the Confessional; or as they exhorted the people to perseverance in the Faith.[17] This massacre—including, moreover, two hundred women who knelt round the market-cross—was "the great mercy" for which Cromwell asked Parliament to join with him in thanks to God! Later on four other of the Franciscans of Wexford were hanged in view of their ruined friary without so much as the formality of a trial. The friary of ROSS, or ROSS-MICTRIAN,[18] county Wexford, was beautifully situated on the river Barrow. It was built for the Conventuals by Sir John Devereux towards the end of the thirteenth

[16] Alemand, p. 234. [17] "Our Martyrs," p. 315. [18] Archdall, p. 750.

century, and placed under the invocation of Saint Saviour. A certain tax, levied on all ships entering Ross harbour, was granted to this community by the founder about the year 1300; and when in 1406 the Provost and Burghers claimed a similar privilege "within the Friars' bounds," the Franciscans appealed to King Henry IV., who confirmed them in their rights, ordering the same to be enforced by James, Earl of Ormond, then Lord-lieutenant of Ireland. Another Earl of Ormond received a grant of all the monastic property at the time of the Suppression. ENNISCORTHY[19] is also in the county Wexford; and there Donald Cavanagh, chief of his Sept, built a friary for the Franciscans of the Strict Observance in the year 1460. This fact is authenticated by an entry in a Missal said to have been copied in that monastery. But some maintain that the foundation had been originally intended for the Conventual Friars. Suppressed during the reign of Henry VIII., in the time of Queen Elizabeth it passed into the possession of Sir Henry Wallop, one of the most ruthless persecutors of the Faithful while Lord Justice of Ireland, A.D. 1582–1584. He it was who suggested that the heroic Dermot O'Hurley, Archbishop of Cashel, should be taken to London where "a suitable instrument of torture" might be found: "the Tower being a better school for such than the Castle of Dublin"—where Wallop was constrained to adopt what he considered the too humane punishment of "toasting" the holy Confessor's "feet against the fire with hot boots!" In making his formal report on this shocking outrage, he did not deem it of sufficient importance to mention that the soldiers sent to plunder the friary of Enniscorthy had murdered the Guardian and Sacristan, after having first subjected them to barbarous torments, because of their loyalty to the Faith, A.D. 1582.[20] The monastic

[19] Alemand, p. 237. Archdall, p. 741. [20] "State Papers" (Brady), p. 72, *sq.*

lands are still in possession of the descendants of Sir Henry Wallop.[21]

Mention is made of the three following Franciscan monasteries in the county Kildare ; while a fourth—that of KILCULLEN [22]—is referred to in an ancient document. Ware, also, seems to have been cognizant of the existence of this foundation. Lord William de Vesci was founder of the friary established at KILDARE [23] in the year 1260. In 1320, an important Chapter was held there ; and in 1520, the strict Observance was adopted, and continued to be practised fervently by the community until the suppression of the monastery by Queen Elizabeth. The year 1266 is the probable date assigned for the building of the friary at CLANE [24]—a work of piety undertaken by Gerald FitzMaurice, Lord of Offaley, who chose the choir of the church as his own burial-place. Pope Eugene IV. addressed a special Brief to the people of Ireland in 1433, exhorting them to assist in the restoration of this sacred edifice, which stood in need of considerable repairs at the time. The monastery at CASTLEDERMOT,[25] said to have derived its name from a St. Dermot who was venerated there, belonged to the Conventual Franciscans : Thomas, Lord Offaley, being the founder (A.D. 1302) ; while members of the Delahoyde family were among the most liberal friends of the friars of this community. The religious there had both their house and church plundered by the Scotch in 1316 ; a signal defeat, which Bruce's soldiers met with in the same place, was regarded as the meet penalty of the sacrilegious crime. The buildings were eventually restored,

[21] "Our Martyrs," p. 126. [22] Ware's "Antiquities," p. 79. Meehan, p. 93.
[23] Alemand, p. 240.

[24 25] Alemand, pp. 240-241. Allusion is also made to a Franciscan monastery at MOONE, county Kildare, where the ruins of the church are still to be seen.—Walsh, p. 489.—And in the Queen's County there was a friary built at STRADBALLY for the Conventual Franciscans during the twelfth century by "The O'Morra." Walsh, p. 620.

and a beautiful Lady-chapel erected in the church by Thomas, Earl of Kildare (A.D. 1328). Parliament was convened in the great hall of this monastery in the year 1499, when an Act was passed relating to the conduct of "ladies," who appeared in public on horseback—a penalty being imposed for each violation of the new statute.

As for the Kilcullen friary, it is ascribed to Rowland FitzEustace, Lord Treasurer of Ireland, who died in 1496, some ten years after his having thus proved himself so good a benefactor to the sons of St. Francis. It seems that on the arrival of Cardinal Pole in England during the reign of Queen Mary (A.D. 1553), the Prelate received a petition from the Guardian of the Franciscan community expelled by the royal agents from the friary at Kilcullen six years previously, imploring his influence with those then in authority to have this and several other Irish monasteries restored to the Order. The Legate willingly complied, and secured the favour sought; but the Franciscans of Kilcullen had to flee to the woods and mountains again on the accession of Queen Elizabeth. Before doing so, however, they are said to have taken down the great bell from the tower, and buried it in a safe place; fearing lest, otherwise, it should be forged into cannon by the English, waging, at the time, so cruel a war against the Faithful of Ireland.

KILLEIGH,[26] in the King's County, was formerly a place of much importance: among the monastic institutions established there special reference is made to a Franciscan friary, founded by a member of the O'Connor family during the reign of King Edward the First. The Guardian of this house—Father Donald O'Bruin—was appointed Bishop of Clonmacnoise in the year 1303. There was another monastery of the

[26] [27] [28] Archdall, pp. 400, 403, 579.

Order of St. Francis at a place called MONISTERORAS,[27] near Edenderry in the same county, erected in 1395 for a community of the Conventual Franciscans by John de Birmingham, Earl of Louth. The walls of the various buildings being so strongly constructed, this monastery was for a long time used as a fortress during the wars of the sixteenth century. But at length a man named Nicholas Herbert got possession of the monastic property.

Some say that the Franciscan friary of TRIM,[28] county Meath, was built by King John ; others give the credit of the good work to the Plunket family, ancestors of the Earls of Fingal. The Observantine Rule was received by this community in 1325 ; five years afterwards a great part of the monastery fell down, the walls having been undermined by the waters of the Boyne overflowing their banks. For some time after the Suppression, the church was used as a court-house ; while the lands were parcelled out among the Protestant clergymen living in the immediate neighbourhood. Archdall says that it was dedicated to St. Bonaventure. A Father Richard Plunkett—probably a descendant of the original founders—passed part of his zealous career as a conventual of this monastery ; he is said to have compiled a very valuable Irish Dictionary.

Concerning the friary established for the Franciscans at ARDAGH,[29] county Longford, we are merely told that St. John the Baptist was its Patron ; and that it was occupied by a community of the Observantines in the year 1521. The members of the Third Order of St. Francis, also, had a monastery in the county Longford at BALLYNASAGGARD,[30] founded for them by the O'Ferrall family. And Wadding states that Cornelius O'Brien, of the royal house of Limerick, built a spacious friary for the Franciscans at BALEGRUAIRCY,[31] in the diocese

[29] [32] Alemand, pp. 247-252. Walsh, p. 535.

of Ardagh, A.D. 1518. After the lands and buildings had passed into the possession of heretics, the Faithful of the neighbourhood were still suffered to bury their dead within the ruined church on payment of a fee to the apostate who claimed the monastic property.

According to Wadding, also, the monastery established for the same Order at YOUGHAL,[32] county Cork, by Maurice FitzGerald—A.D. 1230, or 1231—(others assign the year 1224 as the date of the foundation), was the mother-house of the Franciscans in Ireland. The pious founder was himself clothed in the habit of St. Francis there, after having discharged the high office of Lord Chief Justice: he died in 1257, and was interred within the sacred edifice. There, too, his son Thomas was buried in 1260, having proved himself a good benefactor to the friars during life, enabling them to complete both church and monastery. Chapters were held here occasionally; and the strict Observance having been adopted in 1460, successive generations of the friars transmitted the traditions of great fervour until the time of Queen Elizabeth, when not a wall of the magnificent buildings was left standing intact. Two members of the community underwent martyrdom in testimony of their Faith and Profession: one, Father Daniel O'Duillian, A.D. 1569; the other, Father Daniel O'Neilan, who suffered at Youghal in 1580.[33] The Franciscan monastery in CORK city,[34] more popularly known as "The Grey Abbey," was a tribute of Dermot MacCarthy Reagh's devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and of his esteem for the Conventual Friars (A.D. 1231). After his death, his son Finian became an equally generous friend to the same community. Owing to some unexplained cause, this monastery had to be rebuilt in the year 1240—a work gladly undertaken by Philip

[33] "Our Martyrs," pp. 91-111. [34] Alemand, p. 249. Archdall, p. 66.

Prendergast to whom Kings Henry III., and Edward I. lent their royal aid. The Rule of St. Francis, in all its primitive rigour, was accepted by the members of the community in the year 1500; and there is, also, the record of an important Chapter having been held here in 1291. This friary was known, moreover, as "the Mirror of Ireland," because of the zeal of the religious in their holy vocation: indeed, it was their renown for holiness that caused many noble families of Munster—amongst others the illustrious Desmonds—to choose a last resting-place for their dead in that church of the Franciscans, or in some part of the sacred enclosure. A man named Andrew Skydie got possession of all the monastic property early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Besides these two friaries, there were six other foundations of the Order in the county Cork: those of TIMOLEAGUE[35] and KILCREA,[36] claiming special notice by reason of their most interesting historical associations. The monastery of Kilcrea was a superb structure, and occupied a charming site on the river Bride; it was a striking proof of the love which Cormac MacCarthy, Lord of Muskerry, had for St. Brigid (A.D. 1465). The founder's tomb—he died in 1495—was close to the High Altar; the Barretts also and other ancient families interred their dead at Kilcrea, erecting many fine monuments there. Indeed, both church and friary are said to have been adorned by exquisite works of Art. An apostate MacCarthy was allowed to seize the lands and buildings at the Suppression on condition that he would never suffer the friars to return; or receive the Catholics as his tenants. When the members of this community were trying to escape from their persecutors in the year 1590, one of them—an aged priest named Father Matthew O'Leyne—failed in his attempt to

[35] [36] Alemand, p. 254. Ibidem.

ford the River Bride, and so fell into the hands of the soldiers who instantly put him to a barbarous death. During the reign of King James I., an effort was made to restore the ruins of Kilcrea for the sons of St. Francis; but that monarch, himself the child of a devout Catholic mother, persecuted the Faithful of Ireland as ruthlessly as his predecessor; and in Cromwell's time we find the lands and buildings in the hands of Lord Broghill—the Protector's special favourite. Among the many distinguished members of this community, particular mention is made of Father Thaddeus O'Sullivan, a renowned Franciscan preacher.

The friary of Timoleague was considered one of the grandest houses of the Order in Ireland. It dated, most probably, from the year 1320, and had for its founder Daniel MacCarthy, Prince of Carbery; although some writers would attribute the merit of this good work to William Barry, lord of Ibawn, who, they say, undertook so praiseworthy a task towards the end of the same century. The Observantine Rule was adopted there in 1400; and Provincial Chapters held in 1536, and in 1563. A Franciscan Bishop of Ross—Edmund de Courcy — always took the deepest interest in this monastery, the greater part of which had been rebuilt by his own nephew, James, lord of Kinsale. The soldiers sent to sack Timoleague at the Suppression were guilty of revolting cruelty to such members of the community as fell into their hands; while their efforts to destroy the beautiful buildings—leading off from the cloister with its many graceful arches—afford a painful evidence of the spirit of vandalism that animated the heretical plunderers of those times.[37]

Very little is known concerning the remaining friaries of the Franciscan Order in the county Cork. That of

[37] See "Irish Franciscan Monasteries" — Timoleague and Kilcrea. (Meehan.)

BUTTEVANT[38] was dedicated to St. Thomas, the Martyr; and was founded by David Oge Barry, Lord Buttevant, in the year 1290. BANTRY[39] monastery was built for the Conventual Friars in 1307 by Dermot O'Sullivan Beare. Two members of this community were slain by the heretics of the sixteenth century (A.D. 1580): the one a celebrated preacher, Father Tadhg Donald: and his heroic companion, Father John Hanly. A member of the Barry family is said to have been the founder of the Franciscan friary at CASTLELYONS,[40] which probably dated from sometime in the fourteenth century. Not many writers seem to have been aware of the existence of a house of the same Order at INNISHIRCAN, or INIS-KIERAN,[41] county Cork. It owed its origin to the piety of the generous O'Driscols (A.D. 1460), who built both church and friary for a community of the Observantines. This monastery, among the other buildings on the island of Inis-Kieran, was destroyed by the English inhabitants of Waterford in 1588 when daily expecting the arrival of the dreaded Spanish Armada. But the religious had been driven from their home there at a much earlier date (A.D. 1537).

The first Guardian of the friary of CARRICBEG,[42] county Waterford, was Father John Clynne—that renowned Irish annalist, whose death occurred at Kilkenny during the awful plague. This house was dedicated to St. Michael, being the munificent gift of James, Earl of Ormond, to the Conventual Franciscans about the year 1336, or, perhaps, a little later, as some maintain. Although not very spacious, the buildings were substantial, and beautifully situated amid the lands granted to the community. Earl Thomas of Ormond got possession of all the monastic property in the time of Henry VIII., as a proof of that monarch's favour.

[38] [39] Walsh, p. 384. [40] Alemand, p. 258.
[41] [42] Walsh, pp. 392, 680.

In the city of WATERFORD[43] the Conventual Friars had a foundation for which they held themselves indebted to Lord Hugh Purcell, who died the very year this monastery was built, A.D. 1240, and was buried within the precincts of the newly-erected church. Among the benefactors of this friary were two English Kings, Henry III. and Edward I. Important Chapters were held there in 1317 and 1469; and in 1521 the community embraced the Observantine Reform: the next event chronicled being the seizure of the monastery by the agents of King Henry VIII. We read, moreover, that two of the religious had been raised to the Episcopate, and governed the See of Waterford: Roger Cradock in 1350, and Richard Martin in 1472. William de Waterford—a distinguished member of the Order, who most ably refuted the errors of the Wickliffites—passed part of his life as a member of this community. The Franciscans contrived to remain in Waterford long after the Suppression; but in constant peril of their lives. In the year 1615 they held their Chapter in a private house there, electing Father Mooney Superior of the Irish Province. Before entering the Order, the new Provincial had served as a soldier in the army of the Earl of Desmond; still his career as a friar was quite as full of thrilling incident as his life in camp had been during the great war waged in Ireland for freedom and the Faith. He himself has left us a most interesting account of what he witnessed in the exercise of his missionary labours, Father Purcell—another Irish Franciscan—taking down the entrancing narrative from the aged exile's lips.[44] It was Father Mooney who had also predicted the future fame of Luke Wadding, a child at the time dwelling with his parents in Waterford.

[43] Alemand, p. 248. Walsh, p. 687.

[44] "The Franciscan Monasteries of Ireland" (Meehan).

Donagh Cairbreach O'Brien, Prince of Thomond, founded a magnificent monastery for the Conventual Friars at ENNIS,[45] county Clare, in 1240—soon after he had chosen Clonroad for his own residence. But he died in 1242, before the buildings were completed; so that his son Conor had the privilege of perfecting the work as a testimony of filial devotion to his royal father's memory. Several other Princes of Thomond were benefactors to this house; especially Dermot O'Brien, who, finally, took the habit there, edifying the community by his virtues until his holy death in the year 1313. The Franciscans of Ennis were included among "the Irish enemy without the Pale"; which implied (not to speak of other restrictions) the necessity of their first obtaining the express permission of the English King before they might pass the forbidden bounds to purchase food for the starving people during the terrible famine of the year 1375. At the instance of Murrogh O'Brien the friars of Ennis adopted the Observantine Rule in 1540, when, as the annalist assures us, the Franciscans in other parts of Ireland, particularly in Ulster, were being martyred because of their loyalty to the Faith and the monastic profession. This monastery, however, appears to have been spared until 1577; and then it was seized and plundered by Queen Elizabeth's ruthless agents, the friary itself being converted into a barrack, and the church into a temporary court-house.

The first of the Irish Franciscan monasteries to receive a community of the Observantines was that of QUIN,[46] which lies a few miles to the east of Ennis. It was built by a member of the MacNamara family in 1350, and restored for the Observantines about the year 1423, with the approval of Pope Eugene the Fourth: a work of charity undertaken by another of the MacNamaras, whose tomb may still be seen within the ruins—to which

[45] Walsh, p. 373. [46] "Our Martyrs," p. 100. *sq.*

the friary was reduced in 1583 by the soldiers of Queen Elizabeth. The apostate Turlough O'Brien was not ashamed to share in the sacrilegious plunder. An effort was made by the Catholics of the district in 1604 to restore the sacred edifice, at least; and they partially succeeded; but little sign of the fruits of their self-sacrifice remained after the visit of the Cromwellian vandals to Quin.

It is probable that the Franciscans had two houses in the city of LIMERICK[47]: one on King's Island, dating from the year 1293; the other was built at Irishtown by O'Brien of Thomond during the reign of Henry the Third. A Franciscan Bishop of Cashel, named Torington, had always the welfare of this community dearly at heart. He was a very distinguished Prelate, known and esteemed in various Courts of Europe. When returning through London from a visit to Pope Urban VI., he severely censured, in presence of King Richard II., the conduct of Charles VI. of France; because the French monarch had favoured the pretensions of the anti-pope Clement the Seventh. A few years before his death, which occurred in 1380, he successfully defended the Franciscans of Limerick in some matter of dispute with the Bishop of that diocese. The Observantine Reform was introduced into both the Limerick monasteries in 1534, about ten years before their suppression by King Henry VIII. It is recorded that several of the Franciscans of Limerick were slain by the heretics in 1570. Only the names of Father Dermot O'Mulrony, and a Brother Thomas are mentioned; but it is certain that they had as a companion in suffering at least one other member of the Order: the three having been seized in the friary of Galbally, county Tipperary. Patrick O'Hely—Bishop of Mayo (now united to the Archdiocese of Tuam)—and Father Cornelius O'Rourke,

Archdall, p. 416.

both zealous sons of St. Francis, met with a like glorious fate in the year 1578, somewhere near the city of Limerick.[48]

It is said that the monastery of ADARE,[49] in the county Limerick, was the most beautiful of the Franciscan houses in Munster. The principal benefactors of this community were Thomas, Earl of Kildare; and his wife Joanna—daughter of James, Earl of Desmond, executed in Drogheda (A.D. 1467) because of his sympathies with the "mere Irish." St. Michael was the Patron chosen on the occasion of the foundation-stone being laid, A.D. 1464; the consecration of the church took place two years later on. The Earl of Kildare died in 1478, and was interred there; his wife's remains being laid in the same vault in 1486. There were many generous benefactors of this community; some of these charitable friends gave costly presents of sacred vessels and vestments, while others helped to complete the buildings. This friary was destroyed during the wars which the English waged against the Earl of Desmond; and eventually the monastic property went to enrich the notorious Sir Henry Wallop in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The friary of ASKEATON[50] was another of the foundations made for the Conventual Franciscans in the county Limerick (A.D. 1420). Established by James, the seventh Earl of Desmond, it was reformed by the Observantines in the year 1496. A Chapter was held at Askeaton in 1564, a short time before its seizure by Queen Elizabeth's agents. One of the members of this community—Tadhg O'Daly, a native of Kinvara, county Galway—was put to death by the heretics in 1579; and in 1587, Fathers John Cornelius and Walter Ferall—friars of the same monastery—also died in defence of Catholic Truth. It appears

[48] "Our Martyrs," p. 100, *sq.* [49] Archdall, p. 416.
[50] Alemand, p. 263. Walsh, p. 523.

that sometime during the seventeenth century the remains of Dr. Patrick O'Hely and Cornelius O'Rourke, those two heroic Irish Confessors of the Order of St. Francis, were removed to Askeaton, and interred there together with the instruments of their torture. In the county Limerick, also, according to several writers, the ClanGibbon family built a monastery for the Conventual Friars at a place called BALLYNABRAHIR,[51] during the course of the thirteenth century.

The friary founded for Franciscans at CASHEL,[52] county Tipperary, by Sir William Hacket in the reign of King John, became more popularly known as "Hacket Abbey." It seems to have been a splendid edifice; and in 1331 Pope John XXII. granted a special Indulgence to all who should contribute towards the completion of one of the chapels in the adjoining church. We also find that Pope Urban VI. empowered the Guardian of this community to excommunicate anyone in Munster convicted of upholding the pretensions of the anti-pope Clement the Seventh. The Observantine Rule was introduced in the year 1538; but soon the friars were driven forth by order of Henry VIII., and their home and the monastic lands granted for ever to the Protestant Archbishop intruded into the See of Cashel. And now only a few ruined walls remain to remind us of the after fate of the once well-known "Hacket Abbey."[53]

[51] Archdall, p. 418. [52] Ibidem, p. 651. [53] Lewis, vol. i., p. 288.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE FRANCISCANS.—(*Continued.*)

AFTER Cashel, the friary of CLONMEL[1] was, probably, the most important foundation made for the Franciscans in the county Tipperary. There are various opinions as to its origin; but Father Luke Wadding claims the credit of this good work for the Desmond family assisted by the people of the town of Clonmel, who appear to have had great devotion to St. Francis. The date assigned is the year 1269. We are told that the church was one of the most beautiful in Ireland, and contained some very fine memorials to the dead: a miraculous statue of St. Francis was also preserved there, which the devout Faithful held in highest veneration. The Rule of the Observantines was followed by the community from the year 1536; but the fervour of the friars could not save them from the royal avarice during the reigns of Henry the Eighth and Queen Elizabeth; and only the ruins of the monastery and church were to be seen even in the year 1615. There was another great friary of the Order at NENAGH,[2] in the same county: indeed, some writers assure us that it was the grandest of all the Irish Franciscan monasteries. It was built either by the Butlers or the O'Kennedys during the reign of King Henry the Third. This was the house chosen for the Provincial Chapter of 1344,—the only interesting record mentioned by the annalists until the year 1352, under which date they chronicle the death and burial of Lord Thomas de Cantwell, a generous benefactor of

[1] Alemand, p. 264. [2] Ibidem, p. 266.

the friars of Nenagh. As the monastery was burned down in 1550, the buildings could hardly have been completely restored before they were seized and bestowed upon one of Queen Elizabeth's favourites. Four other Franciscan friaries are said to have been established in the county Tipperary: ARDFINAN,[3] of which bare mention is made; ROSCREA,[4] built in 1490 by Bibiana, widow of Mulruany O'Carroll; the friary of GALBALLY,[5] which, more properly, should have been included among the foundations made in the county Limerick—was yet another proof of the devotion of the O'Brien family to the Order of St. Francis; and KILLINENALLAH friary,[6] founded, according to Ware, sometime during the reign of King Henry the Fourth.

The friary of IRRELAGH,[7] county Kerry, now so well known as "Muckross Abbey," was founded in 1430 by the MacCarthy Mor, Prince of Desmond, on a charming site by the Eastern shore of Loch-Lein—the Lake of Killarney. It was that pious Prince's son Donald who completed the buildings in the year 1440, formally placing the church under the invocation of the Blessed Trinity; in the course of time many beautiful monuments were erected there by the noble families of the surrounding districts. After the friars had been driven thence eventually by the soldiers of King Henry VIII. several of them received the Martyr's crown; while in 1580, the venerable sacristan of the same monastery also laid down his life for the Faith.[8] A small community of the Franciscans made an effort to re-establish themselves at Muckross in 1602; but it was not until the year 1626 that another attempt in this respect proved more successful, when Father Thaddeus Holan and several other friars took up their abode there, enjoying the peace of that holy retreat

[3,5] Walsh, pp. 656, 674, 528. Alemand, p. 267.
[6] "Antiquities," p. 106. [7] al sh, p. 474. [8] "Our Martyrs," pp. 194, 112.

KILCONNELL. (p. 195.)

which was to be so cruelly interrupted by the Puritan persecution. One of the most treasured possessions of this monastery was a miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin, of which particular mention is made. Notwithstanding the vandalism of the Cromwellian soldiers during the siege of Ross Castle, the remains of Muckross Abbey are still extremely interesting, and form a most picturesque sight as approached from the lovely lake. In the same county, we have the Franciscan friary of ARDFERT,[9] erected in 1253 by Thomas, Lord of Kerry. This nobleman is said to have been the first to assume the name of FitzMaurice. He died in the year 1280; and one of his descendants—Desideria, daughter of Gerald FitzMaurice—was very charitable towards the members of this community (A.D. 1354). The Observantine Rule was adopted in 1518; but long before the close of the same century the friary was plundered and ruined by the unscrupulous agents of Henry the Eighth. In this county also, O'Connor, Prince of Kerry, founded a house for the Observantines at LISLAGHTIN,[10] A.D. 1464. All the monastic property passed into the hands of a man named Scolls at the Suppression. Daniel Hinrechan, Philip O'Shea, and Maurice O'Scanlan—three aged priests, members of the same community—were captured by the heretics in the year 1580, and beaten to death before the High Altar of the Franciscan church at Lislaghtin.

In the West of Ireland, the Franciscans had a grand monastery at CLARE-GALWAY,[11] founded by John de Cogan, A.D. 1290. Thomas, Lord Athenry, made a gift of land to this community in order that the profits derived from the same might be devoted to the purpose of buying the breads, and wine and wax candles required in the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries. Suppressed

[9] Walsh, p. 472. [10] Walsh, p. 474.
[11] Alemand, p. 270. Walsh, p. 451.

by Henry VIII., this friary was finally granted to Sir Richard de Burgh by Queen Elizabeth. Some of the religious were to be found near the ruins for many years: in 1641 an effort was made to restore the sacred edifice, at least; but the authorities interfered. Indeed, so late as the year 1765, the Protestant Bishop of Meath bitterly complained that the remains of this ancient monastery were still used as "a Romish Mass House." Several writers are inclined to think that this foundation should be identified with BOILEAU-CLAIR,[12] in the same county, yet offer no reason for their assertion. Those who maintain that the latter friary was quite distinct from the monastery at Clare-Galway, merely inform us that Boileau-Clair was established about the same time—towards the end of the thirteenth century. There was another great Franciscan friary on the Island of St. Stephen, close to the city of GALWAY,[13] founded in 1296 by Sir William de Burg—surnamed "The Grey"—who was himself interred there, having died in 1324. During the troublous times of the anti-pope Clement VII., we find that the Guardian of the Galway community received special faculties from Pope Urban VI. to excommunicate those who should favour the pretensions of that aspirant to the Tiara. The names of many of the benefactors of this house have been handed down to us, among whom were the Frenches, the De Burgs, and the O'Flaherties. Maurice O'Fihiley—called "Flos Mundi," by reason of his marvellous learning—was a conventual of the Galway monastery before his elevation to the Archiepiscopal See of Tuam in 1506. He died among his brethren there in 1513, having assisted at the Fifth Lateran Council the preceding year. Two of his successors in the See of St. Jarlath—Thomas O'Mullaly and Christopher Bodkin—were, in the course of time, laid to rest by his side. When this

[12] Ibidem. [13] Alemand, p. 268.

friary was eventually suppressed, the citizens of Galway got possession of the monastic lands ; while the church and buildings were bestowed upon a man, who, strange to say, proved a true and generous friend of the plundered Franciscans. It was only in the year 1603, after Sir George Carew had seized the monastery in the name of King James the First, that the sacred edifice became desecrated, the High Altar being transformed into a bench "for a bloated judge, entirely ignorant of the language and customs of the people ;" the pulpit used as a witness-box, and a crowd of "bawling lawyers" occupying the choir and chancel.[14] It is quite probable that some, if not all, of the six heroic sons of St. Francis—Roger Donnellan, Charles Goran, Peter O'Chillian, Patrick O'Kenna, James Pillan and Roger O'Hanlon, who had laboured so zealously in discharge of their missionary duties throughout Connaught before their holy death in 1582—spent some time in the Galway monastery.[15]

Even at the present day the ruins of the Franciscan friary founded at KILCONNELL,[16] county Galway, in the year 1353, evince the grandeur of the original structure. Indeed, according to an annalist of the Order, who wrote early in the seventeenth century, this monastery seemed to have been preserved by a special providence when all the other houses of the Irish Franciscans were plundered and destroyed. It was built by William O'Kelly, of the O'Kellys of Hy-Many, for a community of the Conventual Friars ; the site chosen being at once convenient and picturesque. The walls were all of finely cut stone ; and the workmanship—so admirable in every detail—could hardly be excelled : an assertion that will appeal to those who have beheld the beautiful tower, and what remains of the spacious church and cloister.

[14] Archdall (Dublin, 1876), vol. ii., p. 210. [15] "Our Martyrs," p. 125.
[16] Archdall, vol. ii., p. 217 *sq.*

Considerable additions were made to several of the monastic buildings by Malachy O'Kelly, who also succeeded in having the Observantine Rule introduced there in the year 1460. The interior of the church was elaborately adorned, and contained a number of handsome altars and monuments erected by the principal families of the West of Ireland; while in later times tombs and mural tablets were raised there to the memory of those "Transplanters"—victims of the Cromwellian adventurers. This monastery was made the head-quarters of the ruthless Sir Richard Bingham (whom Queen Elizabeth herself had to rebuke for his barbarous treatment of the Irish) during his stay in that part of Connaught. Nevertheless, we are informed that after the Suppression he treated the friars of Kilconnell with unwonted leniency and kindness; and prevented his soldiers injuring the church in any way. But in the year 1596, the troops under Sir Conyers Clifford wrought fearful havoc there; although their captain—named Stryck—succeeded in saving the monastery from total ruin. This Stryck was, also, well disposed towards the community, allowing the religious to occupy some of the cells, and even to say Mass privately in the sacristy. When the buildings and lands were finally confiscated, they fell into the hands of a royal favourite called Callthorp, who dealt most harshly with the friars. Still a number of them remained in the neighbourhood all through the Penal Times—seeking refuge in a dangerous bog after the battle of Aughrim—until well into the eighteenth century: always befriended by the descendants of the O'Kellys and the other ancient families, benefactors of the Franciscans who had first come to Kilconnell.

Another very important Franciscan foundation in the county Galway was the friary of St. Michael at ATHENRY,[17] of which, however, no mention is made in the useful list

[17] Alemand, p. 284. Lewis, vol i, p. 83.

furnished us by Burke. Some of the ruins are still to be seen close to the Protestant church, in the building of which certain modern vandals did not spare the hallowed remains of the ancient monastery. The year 1464 is the date assigned for the establishment of this house, Thomas, Earl of Kildare, bestowing the generous gift on a community of the Observantines in honour of the Archangel Michael, to whom the Faithful of Ireland appear to have always had a special devotion. But the buildings were not completed during the life-time of the pious founder; his countess—the lady Margaret Gibbon—continued the good work, however, and erected one of the side-chapels within the sacred edifice. Her example was followed by the Earl of Desmond, who undertook to build a second chapel; while a member of the O'Tully family gladly became responsible for a third. Raymond de Burgh, the Observantine Bishop of Emly, who died in 1562, was interred within the cloister of this friary, which was at length suppressed by command of Queen Elizabeth.

The learned Ferrall MacEgan, Provincial of the Irish Franciscans in 1572, often spoke of the friary of ROSSERILLY [18]—about eight miles from the town of Tuam—as the "Thebaid of the Order." Although situated amid dreary bogs and marshes, the buildings were very beautiful and spacious, as may still be seen from the ruins, testifying to an unknown benefactor's munificence: no mention is made of the founder's name; but the year 1351 is definitely assigned as the date of the establishment of this monastery. An Englishman obtained possession of the lands and buildings from the agents of Queen Elizabeth; and his avarice extended not alone to the sacred vessels and vestments, but even to the rifling of the tombs of those interred within the monastic enclosure. After a little while, however—chiefly owing

[18] Archdall, p. 296 (Lord Granard is said to have been the founder, A.D. 1498.) Alemand, p. 285. Archdall (Ed. 1876), vol. ii., p. 294.

to the good offices of a worthy Earl of Clanricarde—a small community of six priests and two lay-brothers were permitted to reside in the monastery; but eventually they became the victims of the bigotry of Daniel, the Protestant Archbishop of Tuam. This house is not to be identified with the friary of ROSS,[19] also in the Archdiocese of Tuam, built for a community of the Conventual Friars in the year 1431, and reformed by the Observantines in 1470.

The De Burghs are said to have established a small monastery for the sons of St. Francis at KENALEHAN,[20] also in the county Galway, sometime during the fourteenth century. The adjoining church appears to have been a large and handsome edifice; and after it had been burned down together with the other monastic buildings by Sir Richard Bingham, the work of restoration was speedily undertaken by the Clanricardes—against whom the Franciscan annalist had but one grave fault to allege: they, like most of the Anglo-Irish families, always favoured the English in preference to the devoted people of Ireland. Richard de Burgh was then (A.D. 1604) Earl of Clanricarde; but was more popularly known as "Richard of Kinsale," because of his loyalty during the siege of that town by the Spaniards. This same year the remains of the gallant Bryan Oge O'Rourke—son of Bryan-na-Murtha O'Rourke, who died for the Faith in London after enduring a cruel persecution on account of the charitable aid which he had afforded to some survivors from the Spanish Armada—were interred in the Franciscan church at Kenalehan. There were other houses of the Order in the county Galway at ENAGHDUNE,[21] SLEUSHAN-COGH,[22] and TEAGH-SAXON[23]; concerning which foundations, however, nothing is known with exception of Teagh-Saxon friary, built by one of the Bourkes for Franciscan Tertiaries sometime during the reign of

[19-20] Archdall, pp. 296-293 (Ed. 1876), vol. ii., p. 224.

Henry the Seventh, and granted at the Suppression to the municipal authorities of Athenry. Teagh-Saxon is only about two miles distance from that town; and, as the name implies, became a place of considerable importance after the Anglo-Norman and Saxon invasion of Ireland. It is probable that the site of this monastery had previously been occupied by an ancient abbey completely destroyed by lightning in the year 1177. Mention is also made of a Franciscan friary on the largest of the ISLES OF ARRAN,[24] dating from 1485; and of one at MEELICK,[25] erected on a charming spot by the river Shannon, and owing its origin to the O'Maddens about the beginning of the thirteenth century. Meelick was plundered by William de Burgo when he invaded Connaught in 1203; it passed into the hands of the Earl of Clanricarde at the dissolution of the Irish monasteries. The O'Maddens founded another friary for the Franciscans at a place called CLOCHIN-CANTUALAIG,[26] early in the fifteenth century; and it seems that there was a monastery of the Order of St. Francis at FALLIG,[27] too, established there in 1390 by a pious Irishman, from whom the place derived its name.

Burke does not include in his list of the Franciscan monasteries founded in the county Galway the houses established for the members of the Third Order; yet it appears that these, likewise, were extremely important friaries. There were as many as fifty foundations of this kind throughout the country, the homes of fervent religious who led a most mortified life, visiting the sick and dying, and training the young in the sciences and classics, as well as in the principles of the true Faith: "so that the mere peasant lads were as familiar with Virgil, Horace and Homer as with the genealogies of the Milesian Kings." Most of these friaries were built during the

[21-26] Walsh, pp. 454-469. Ibidem, 450, 466, 451.

course of the fifteenth century ; and the authors, without exception, are loud in praise of the splendid service rendered to the Irish Church by the Franciscan Tertiaries of that epoch, and in subsequent times. Still we find but passing allusion to the following foundations made for Friars of the Third Order in the county Galway: CLONKEEN,[28] built by Thomas O'Kelly, Bishop of Clonfert (A.D. 1435); CLOONYVORNAGE—A.D. 1442[29]; TEMPLEMOYLE—A.D. 1441[30]; KILTULLAGH—A.D. 1441[31]; BEAGH —A.D. 1441[32]; KILBOUGHT[33], where Matthew Macreagh, Bishop of Clonfert, died in 1507, and which is said to have owed its origin to the Waley family ; and KILLINEBONDINA—A.D. 1428.[34] Some writers add the friary of KILCORBAN—A.D. 1446,[35] founded by Thomas de Burgh, Bishop of Clonfert ; others, however, maintain that this house belonged to a community of Dominican Tertiaries.

There was certainly a very important monastery of the Order of St. Francis in the town of ROSCOMMON,[36] founded in the year 1269, but destroyed by fire soon afterwards ; still the authors generally do not appear to have been aware of the existence of this friary. And in the county Roscommon the Conventual Franciscans were established at BEALANENEY,[37] although no details of the foundation have come down to us ; they were also introduced into ELPHIN[38] by Cornelius, Bishop of this Diocese, with the approval of his Canons and of the people of the town (A.D. 1450). It seems that the friars had been in charge of a church there dedicated to St. Patrick until a monastery was built for them in the course of time. A Protestant bishop was permitted by the agents of Queen Elizabeth to seize this house and the monastic lands. Father John O'Dowd—a member of the community—was put to a most cruel death in 1579 for having refused to violate

[27-34] Alemand, pp. 278, 293, 294.
[35-38] Walsh, pp. 463, 636, 624 629.

the Seal of Confession at the impious command of some English soldiers.[39]

The Franciscan monastery of MOYNE,[40] county Mayo, was a superb edifice situated on the river Moy, near its entrance to the Bay of Killala, and affording a grand view of the Atlantic. It was the gift of MacWilliam Burke to St. Francis, at the instance of Father Nehemias O'Donoghoe—the first Vicar-Provincial of the Irish Observantines, renowned as a preacher and for his eminent holiness (A.D. 1460). The beautiful church was consecrated in 1462 by Donatus O'Connor, Bishop of Killala, and placed under the invocation of St. Francis. Soon after this solemn ceremony the founder had the claustral limits marked out by a massive stone wall. Beneath the church was a crypt wherein might be seen the tombs of many noble benefactors, not a few of whom had worn the humble habit of St. Francis during life. The library was very valuable, a great number of precious works having been collected there, this house being a college of the Irish Province for more than a hundred and fifty years: the community rarely comprised less than fifty religious—whether priests, students, or lay-brothers. Here, too, the Provincial Chapters were frequently held. When suppressed by command of Queen Elizabeth, the friary of Moyne became the scene of the martyrdom of several heroic sons of Saint Francis. Brothers Phelim O'Hara and Henry Delahoyde, slain by the heretics in 1578, were also members of the same community. And some say that it was here, likewise, Father John O'Dowd—known as the "St. John Nepomucene of Ireland"—laid down his life for the Faith.[41] Early in the seventeenth century the Franciscans succeeded

[39] "Our Martyrs," p. 108. The Franciscan Tertiaries had friaries at CALDRYWOLLAGH and CLONRAHAN in the county Roscommon.—Walsh, p. 627.—And at BALLYMOTE and COURT in the county Sligo. Ibidem, pp 641, 646.

[40] Walsh, p. 580.

[41] Walsh, p. 580, *sq.*

in renting the church and some of the monastic buildings ; and were tolerated by the Scotch and English settlers, who had found it greatly to their advantage to live on friendly terms with the Catholics of that district. But when Cromwell came the friars of Moyne could only save themselves from the rage of his fanatical followers by escaping into exile. Not far from this monastery, the Franciscan Tertiaries had a spacious friary built for them at ROSSERICK,[42] in the course of the fifteenth century, by a representative of the Joyce family. We are assured, moreover, that there was another foundation made for the Order of St. Francis at BOGHMOYEN,[43] county Mayo ; and one at STRADE,[44] which seems to have been occupied by a community of Dominicans in the year 1252. In the same county there appears to have been yet another house of the Order, which friary was popularly called " MONS PIETATIS." [45]

At the pious request of his wife Margaret—daughter of Conor O'Brien, King of Thomond—Owen O'Rourke, Prince of Breffny, founded a monastery for the Franciscans at CREEVELEA, or BALLYROURK,[46] county Leitrim, A.D. 1508. It is said to have rivalled any of the other friaries of the Irish Province from an architectural point of view ; and is supposed to have been built on the site of an ancient sanctuary, dating from the time of St. Patrick ; hence the place is still called " Carrig-Phadruig," or Patrick's Rock. The first community came from the monastery of Donegal ; indeed the Princess Margaret always retained a great admiration for the friars of that famous establishment, which owed so much to the generosity of her own sister Fingalla. Thomas MacBrady, Bishop of Kilmore, consecrated the church in 1511 ; next year the good Princess died, and was laid to rest in

[42] [43] Archdall, pp. 508, 497, 509, 566. The Conventual Franciscans are said to have had a house at POWFINAN in the county Mayo ; and also at KILLINEY.—Walsh p. 563, 576.

[44] Archdall, p. 407.

a magnificent tomb erected by her royal spouse in the chancel—his own remains being interred there also in 1528, after he had worn the Franciscan habit for some years. One night during the year 1536, while the religious were at rest, a great portion of the sacred edifice was burned down; and Father Heremon O'Donnell lost his life in trying to reach the Tabernacle. Many precious books were destroyed on the same occasion, and the various monastic buildings suffered considerably from the action of the fire. But the monastery and church were eventually repaired by Bryan Ballach O'Rourke. It was in this friary that Father Mooney—to whom we are so indebted for his interesting account of the Irish Province during his own times—received Holy Orders and celebrated his first Mass. A small community returned to Creevelea sometime in the year 1642; but after the Cromwellian persecution, the friars could only dwell secretly in a thatched cabin near the ruins of their former home; and from that lowly abode still persevered in attending to the spiritual needs of the Faithful. In the county Leitrim also, there was that friary established for the Conventual Franciscans at BALLEGUARCY[47] by Cornelius O'Brien, A.D. 1518; and William O'Reilly built one at THACINELING[48]—A.D. 1414—which was subsequently reformed by the Observantines at the suggestion of a member of the founder's family. Then, there was a monastery of this Order at JAMESTOWN,[49] on the Shannon; while the Franciscan Tertiaries, also, are said to have had a house in the county Leitrim, concerning which, however, nothing further is known.

The Plunkets, of Louth, founded a great monastery for the Franciscans at DROGHEDA,[50] A.D. 1240. A beautiful site near the river Boyne was chosen for this house, of the proportions of which we may form some idea from the fact that the choir could accommodate as many as

[47-49] Archdall, pp. 407, 410, 409.

two hundred religious. The church was, in the beginning, regarded as a place of sanctuary. Other noble families of Drogheda were likewise very generous to this community, freely contributing the funds necessary for the repair of the different parts of the monastery seriously injured by an inundation of the Boyne in the year 1330. The friars had adopted the Observantine Rule in 1518, and were fervently practising the same when interrupted by the soldiers of Queen Elizabeth. In 1612, an adventurer named Moses Hill purchased the monastic property from Gerald Aylmer, as a financial speculation; but his scheme did not succeed; so, later on, he pulled down both church and friary—with exception of the tower and great Eastern window—and sold the cut-stones for building purposes. Many a thrilling incident of the Franciscan mission at Drogheda during the Penal Times is on record; and will, doubtlessly, furnish interesting subject-matter to the writer tracing the fate of our Irish "Thebaid" from the final Suppression of its monasteries down to the present more tolerant age. The Franciscans had also a friary at DUNDALK,[51] county Louth, established for them by John de Verdon in the reign of King Henry the Third. An important Chapter was held there in 1282: we are informed, moreover, that this house had the grand distinction of being one of the first friaries to be plundered by the agents of Henry the Eighth. Father Mooney recounts a strange anecdote concerning the grandson of the royal favourite who had secured for himself the possessions of the Franciscans of Dundalk. When on a visit to that town in the year 1616, a certain John Brandon called to see the Friar and told him that he had inherited some monastic property, granted to his grandfather by the Crown; but which he himself scrupled retaining without the consent of the proper Ecclesiastical authorities. Father Mooney submitted the matter to

[50] [51] Archdall, pp. 458-464. Alemand, pp. 233-234.

his superiors, with the result that Brandon was allowed to hold the lands in question under conditions to which he readily assented.

Hugh de Lacy receives credit of having founded the Franciscan friary of CARRICKFERGUS,[52] in the county Antrim, A.D. 1231. This house was reformed by the Observantines in 1479; and in 1510 a General Chapter of the Order is said to have assembled there. All the property pertaining to this establishment passed into the hands of Sir Arthur Chichester at the Suppression. There were several monasteries of the Third Order in the same county: that of BONAMARGY,[53] built by the MacDonnells in 1498; MASSARENE,[54] also dating from the fifteenth century, and of which the O'Neils were the founders; LAMBEG,[55] established about the same time, likewise attributed to the MacDonnells; and that of GLENARM[56] of which Robert Bissett, a Scotchman, was the principal benefactor (A.D. 1465). Alemand adds that of INVERNAILE[56a] —dating from the fifteenth century—but this was one of the foundations made in the county Donegal.

The origin of the Franciscan friary of DOWN[57]—A.D. 1240—is, also, assigned to Hugh de Lacy, the younger, although several writers claim the merit of the good work for Africa, the pious spouse of Sir John de Courcey. According to those who hold that the "Subtle Doctor" was an Irishman, Dun Scotus spent part of his distinguished career in the friary of Down—his native place, as various writers maintain.[58] A Provincial Chapter met there in the year 1313. And during the guardianship of Father Thomas MacCominde, Father Patrick Kearin being the Minister Provincial, the community embraced the Observantine Rule. In the year 1570 this monastery was visited by a troop of soldiers, under the command of an Englishman named John Britton, who seized Fathers John O'Lochran, Edmond FitzSimon and Donogh

[52-57] Alemand, pp. 291-292.

Roarke; and, having tortured them most barbarously, hanged them near St. John's Well—the place where angels are said to have appeared to St. Patrick. Two other members of the same community were slain in the garden of the monastery, after Britton had accepted a large sum of money from the people of Down as a ransom for the lives of these heroic friars. It is stated that there were houses of the Order at ARDICNISE,[59] and DROMORE[60]; and that the Tertiaries had establishments at HOLLYWOOD,[61] and BANGOR,[62] the famed abbey of which latter place was handed over to those zealous sons of St. Francis in 1469 with the approval of Pope Paul the Second.

It was the Archbishop Maelpatrick O'Scannail who introduced the Franciscans into ARMAGH[63] in the year 1264, after The MacDonnell had built a fine monastery for the Conventual friars in the Primatial city. The O'Neils, whose monument adorned the church, were among the most generous friends of this community. One of the religious, Father Michael by name, was appointed to govern the See of Armagh in 1303; and when in 1347 a successor of his—Richard FitzRalph—would question the privileges of the friars, Pope Innocent IV., then at Avignon, decided the case in favour of the Franciscans. The Observantine Reform was adopted in 1518; and in the course of the same century the monastic buildings were all destroyed by fire during the war between Shane O'Neill and the troops of Queen Elizabeth (A.D. 1566). It seems the friars managed to escape on that occasion; but a short time previously Fathers Roger McCongail, Fergal MacWard, and Cornelius MacVarra had been captured by the English soldiers and brutally flogged through the streets of Armagh. Two of them did not survive this terrible ordeal. About ten years afterwards Father Fergal—the Guardian of the

[58] [59] Alemand, pp. 272-273. "Our Martyrs," p. 94
[60-63] Walsh, 405, 414, 415, 411.

friary, and a most zealous defender of Catholic doctrine —was again seized by the heretics, and notwithstanding his great age subjected to the same inhuman treatment before his persecutors finally strangled him with his own cincture (A.D. 1575). In the county Armagh, the members of the Third Order of St. Francis had a very important establishment at KILLSLERE,[64] founded for them sometime in the fifteenth century.

St. Mary's friary at CAVAN,[65] originally founded—A.D. 1300—for the Dominicans by the O'Reillys of Breffny, was granted to the Conventual Franciscans in the year 1393, at the instance of some members of the founder's family. The English, under John Tiptoft Earl of Worcester, burned down this monastery in 1468, but it was again restored; for in 1499 we find it in charge of a community of the Observantines. Provincial Chapters were held there in 1521; in 1539; and in 1556. After the Suppression, it was one of the Irish friaries used as courthouses during the reign of King James the First.

The most interesting chapter in the important narrative left us by Father Mooney contains his account of the Franciscan monastery of DONEGAL.[66] According to this annalist, the foundation was due to the earnest request made by Nuala O'Connor, wife of Hugh Roe O'Donnell, to the superiors of the Order assembled in Chapter at ROSS-RIAL in the year 1474. Her husband had undertaken to contribute the requisite funds; and soon a noble pile of buildings, destined to become so famed in Irish History, rose amid charming scenery at the head of the Bay of Donegal. The Princess of Tirconnell continued to befriend this community; while Hugh Oge, the founder's son, took the holy habit there towards

[64] [65] Alemand, pp 276-293. Archdall (Ed. 1876), vol. i., p. 67. According to Wadding a monastery was founded for the Conventual Friars at Stradhailloyse, county Armagh,—A.D. 1282.

[66] Archdall, (Ed. 1876), vol. i., p. 186 *sq.*

the close of his successful career (A.D. 1537). A Bishop of Raphoe—Menelaus MacCarmacan—had already died wearing the Franciscan habit (A.D. 1515); and Roderick O'Donnell, Bishop of Derry, whose remains were likewise interred there (A.D. 1550), implored the privilege of being laid to rest in the same sacred shroud. The annalist assures us that it would be quite impossible for him to so much as mention the names of all the eminent men whose burial took place in the friary of Donegal during the next hundred years; but whether renowned for their learning, or their valour, they were invariably distinguished by the holiness of their lives. Among them was a saintly friar named Bernard Gray—a priest famed throughout Ireland for the gift of miracles; his death occurred in the year 1549. There was a very valuable library attached to this monastery; and here, too, in after years, the "Annals of the Four Masters" were compiled.[67] Of course everything fell into the hands of the plunderers of the Irish monasteries during the reign of Henry VIII., or when several of that monarch's immediate successors were in power. And now only a few sad ruins remain to remind us of the former grandeur of the friary of Donegal. However, before its final suppression, a community of fully forty religious dwelt there in peace again for a time, protected by the valiant O'Donnell. But at length they shared the fate of their brethren all over Ireland during the Penal Days. The Guardian—Father Tadhg O'Boyle, a celebrated preacher—was slain by the English soldiery in 1588.[68] His death was avenged by the young Hugh Roe O'Donnell, after the marvellous escape of that chieftain from the dungeons of Dublin Castle. Moreover, Cornelius O'Devany, Bishop of Down and Connor—who, together with another Franciscan named Father Patrick O'Lochran, died for

[67] A.D. 1636. (O'Donovan's Translation of the Irish MS. was published in Dublin in 1856).

[68] "Our Martyrs," p. 195 *sq.*

the Faith in Dublin (A.D. 1612)—is said to have once been a member of the community of the friary of Donegal.

Ware mentions several other foundations made for the Conventual Franciscans in the county Donegal. That of KILMACRENAN,[69] attributed to the pious O'Donnells; BELLAGAN[70]; and the friary of BALLYMACSWEENY,[71] which is supposed to have been built by the MacSweeny family. The Tertiaries of the same Order were established at MAGHERIBEG,[72] and at KILLODONNELL[73]—both monasteries being traced to the generosity of the O'Donnells. The Franciscans had a friary at KILLYBEGS,[74] founded by the MacSweeny-bannig; and the representative of another branch of the MacSweeny family erected one for them at a place called FANEGARAG.[75]

With regard to Franciscan establishments in the counties Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh, only Burke alludes to a friary said to have existed in the city of DERRY.[76] There were a number of houses belonging to the members of the Third Order in the county Tyrone: that of DUNGANNON,[77] founded by the O'Neil during the reign of Henry VII.; and those of BALLINSAGHART[78]; CORROCK,[79]; GERVAGH-KERIN,[80]; PUBBAL[81]; and OMAGH.[82] We are not told whether the friary of STRABANE[82] was intended in the beginning for the Tertiaries; but it was certainly a Franciscan foundation. In the county Fermanagh, the monastery of LISGOOL[84]—A.D. 1106—had been originally built for the Canons Regular; but in the course of time it was transferred to the Conventual Friars by Papal authority. Before the buildings could be completely restored—the ancient monastery being almost in ruins—this house was suppressed, and granted by the royal agents to Sir John Davis.

Phelim MacMahon rendered most generous assistance

[69-71] "Antiquities," p. 96.
[72-75] Alemand, p. 292.
[76] "Appendix Monastica," p. 747.
[77-83] Walsh, pp. 678 *sq.*

to the Franciscans in establishing their friary at MONAGHAN [85]—A.D. 1462—on the site of the ancient abbey of St. Moeldod. This house was destroyed by the English in the year 1540, the stones of the monastic buildings being used by a man named Edward White in the construction of a castle. Several members of the community —among them Father Patrick O'Brady, the Guardian— were then put to death by the heretics: according to some of our annalists, as many as sixteen of the friars were called upon to lay down their lives for the Faith.[86] The "Four Masters" inform us that about this epoch a fierce persecution against the monastic Orders raged in Ireland; and that the number of its victims—our heroic Irish Confessors—can be known to God alone. And the reasons, to which we have frequently alluded, are again assigned to explain how history has suffered by the wanton destruction of the archives and libraries of so many Irish monasteries.[87]

What has been said concerning the introduction of the Dominican nuns into Ireland, might be repeated with regard to the Poor Clares, earliest mention of their existence in this country being under date of the year 1511; when a convent of "the Poor Sisters of St. Francis" was opened in the City of GALWAY[88] by Walter Lynch Fitz-Thomas—the Mayor—at the pious entreaty of his own daughter. We may add, moreover, that the Irish Franciscan Friars made several important foundations abroad during the course of the seventeenth century: notably that of "St. Isidore's" in Rome (A.D. 1625), which was mainly due to the zeal of Father Luke Wadding. However, the object of the present narrative does not allow even passing reference to each of these

[84] [85] Archdall, pp. 264, 586. [86] "Our Martyrs," p. 89.

[87] NOTE.—Although, in most instances, only better known Works of Reference have been cited, the author has endeavoured to verify each statement by comparing it with the original source of the information.

[88] "Appendix Monastica," p. 747.

R.P. THOMAS AQUINAS A S. THERESIA HIBERNUS. PLURIMIS IN
CATHOLICÆ FIDEI VERITATE FELICITER CONFIRMATIS CARCERE
OPPROBRIA AC VERBERA INVICTE PERPESSUS AB HERETICIS TAN
SUSPENDIO NECATUS ILLUSTRE DEDIT FIDEI TESTIMONIUM PO
MANÆ PRIDIE NONAS IULII MDC/LII CUIUS TUMULUM ARDEN
FACE COELO FACES VEL IISIS SPECTANTIBUS ET HERETICIS HON
ESTARUNT.

FATHER THOMAS AQUINAS OF JESUS, O.D.C

(p. 237.)

monasteries; nor to the Irish Province of the other great branch of the Order of St. Francis—the Capuchins —whose members first came to assist in reviving the glory of the "Second Thebaid" about that same period: many of them being included, no doubt, among those unknown Franciscans who died for the Faith in Ireland in later Penal Times.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE AUGUSTINIANS.

THE Hermits of St. Augustine, or Augustinian Friars, are, like the Canons Regular, entitled to claim the great Doctor of Hippo as their holy Founder. And their Institute has, from the beginning, been formed according to the spirit of his teaching: its members proposing to themselves the Saint's example of persevering fervour in their efforts to attain to Christian perfection. As for the ancient origin of their Order, we need only say that the explanation offered by the Augustinian apologists—rightly jealous of their own traditions—seems far more satisfactory in every respect than the theories of those inclined to reject, as a mere pretension on the part of the Hermits, this claim to an historical descent similar to that upheld by the Canons Regular.[1]

But in the present constitution of the Order, the Augustinians date back to about the middle of the thirteenth century, when several already existing Congregations of Hermits, following much the same mode of life, were united by Pope Alexander the Fourth, becoming eventually recognised as Mendicant Friars during the Pontificate of Saint Pius the Fifth (A.D. 1567). Their Rule was extremely severe, ordaining that great spirit of retirement from the world, which, nevertheless, proved rather a help than a hindrance to them in the exercise of their missionary zeal. Inevitable modifications were introduced into the Regular Observance in the

[1] NOTE—An interesting article on the "Primitive Rule" of this Order appeared in the July issue of the "Irish Ecclesiastical Record" (1903).

course of time; but, as surely, subsequent earnest endeavours restored the primitive rigour of the original Rule. That the Order of Augustinian Hermits flourished in the Church is clearly evident from one fact alone: some three thousand monasteries had been established throughout the world before the beginning of the sixteenth century, the number of the friars being about thirty thousand; there were, besides, several hundred convents of Augustinian nuns. We may add, moreover, that prior to the great union alluded to, one of the Congregations of Hermits—that instituted by the Blessed John Bon—claimed St. Francis Assisi as a subject before he had founded the order which bears his own name; although writers maintain that this assertion is not based on sufficiently trustworthy authority.[2]

An Augustinian author informs us that there were as many as sixty-one houses of this Order in Ireland at the time of the Suppression. However, more modern historians will only admit that they themselves could find anything like reliable information concerning twenty-six friaries of the Irish Hermits; and, consequently, hold that the remaining thirty-five monasteries—of which Father Lubin makes mention—must have belonged to the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine. Unfortunately the Archives of the Order can throw very little light on the subject; so few books and documents of importance escaped the vandalism of those deputed to uproot the monastic institutions of Ireland in the sixteenth century.

Seeing that the year 1259 is usually assigned for the foundation of the Augustinian friary of "Holy Trinity," DUBLIN,[3] we may infer this to be the more probable epoch of the first coming of the Hermits to

[2] *Histoire du Clergé*, vol. iii., p. 36, *sq.* "A Catholic Dictionary," p. 56.
[3] Alemand, p. 305. Archdall, p. 212. "Our Martyrs," p. 81, *sq.*

the country: and it is equally probable that none of the various Congregations had already been introduced into Ireland previous to the union effected among them by the action of Pope Alexander the Fourth (A.D. 1256). The site of the Dublin monastery was in Crow Street, a member of the Talbot family undertaking all the expenses of this great work. The new foundation became the college of the Irish Province: although, strictly speaking, the Augustinians of Ireland were under the jurisdiction of the English Provincial, until a Superior of their own received canonical appointment to the same office during the course of the sixteenth century. Many distinguished members of the Order are said to have prepared themselves there for the labours that were afterwards to redound greatly to the glory of the Irish Church. In the year 1309, Father Robert, the prior of Holy Trinity, was one of the witnesses summoned to attend at the famous trial of the Knights Templar. It was impossible for this friary to escape the notice of King Henry VIII.; for that monarch had keenly been mortified by the publication of a celebrated treatise on the authority of the Roman Pontiff, the work of a member of the same community: the Venerable Father John Travers, who clearly exposed the hypocrisy of Henry's attitude towards the Holy See. Foreseeing what influence the author of such a book would have among the people, the advisers of the Crown in Dublin had Father Travers arrested and taken prisoner to London. A charge of high treason was brought against him, and he received the Martyr's Palm at Tyburn on the 30th of July, 1535—one of the first of our Irish Confessors of the Faith slain during that terrible series of persecutions which followed the English King's sad revolt from Rome. The house of the Dublin Augustinians was seized and plundered later on, and finally passed into the possession of a man named Walter Tyrrel.

If the Augustinian friary at DROGHEDA [4]—the next mentioned by the annalists—did not owe its origin to the Brandon family, as some writers say, it is certain that the community there held themselves deeply indebted to the generosity of those pious benefactors, then of considerable importance in the county Louth. The foundation took place sometime during the reign of Edward the First; and a General Chapter of the Order was convened there in the year 1359. This friary was granted to the Mayor and citizens of Drogheda by Henry VIII. at the dissolution of the Irish monasteries; but it seems that the Hermits secured possession again in the course of the following century. For Father Peter Taaffe, the Augustinian friar whom Cromwell's soldiers put to death at the taking of the city in 1649, was prior of this house. In acquainting Parliament with what he had done at Drogheda, Cromwell boasted of having slain nearly a thousand defenceless Catholics, together with *all* the friars, in the church of St. Peter.

We find that there were five monasteries of this Order in the County Wexford; but the only items of reliable information preserved concern those of ROSS,[5] and CLONMINES.[6] The latter was a fine building, with much land attached; the O'Cavanaghs were its original founders; but it was considerably enlarged in the year 1385 by a certain Nicholas, surnamed "the Clerk." It was granted to John Parker at the Suppression; still some writers are of opinion that prior to this event the friary of Clonmines was occupied by a community of Dominicans. The names of the benefactors of the Augustinian monastery at Ross are not mentioned; probably its establishment dated from the reign of King Edward the Third. Possession of all the monastic property of the community there was

[4] Archdall, p. 459.

bestowed upon Edward Butler in the time of Henry the Eighth. Only the writers of the Order allude to the foundations said to have been made at WEXFORD,[7] and in two other places in the same county, the names of which cannot now be identified. Either the authors generally are altogether silent on the subject, or else adduce reasons to show that the Augustinian annalists must have been mistaken in their conjectures.

There was but one foundation of the Hermits in the county Kilkenny—that of CALLAN,[8] built by James, Earl of Ormond, A.D. 1487. Thomas, another Earl of Ormond, became enriched by the plunder of this house at the Suppression. The various authors do not appear to have had any misgivings about the existence of this monastery; but few seem inclined to accept the statements made by Father Lubin concerning the Augustinian friaries, which, he assures us, were founded elsewhere in the same county, including one in the city of Kilkenny.[9]

Early in the reign of King Edward II., Simon Lombard and Hugh Tallon introduced the Hermits of St. Augustine into the village of St. John, near TULLAGH,[10] county Carlow. Edward III. confirmed the grants made to this community—A.D. 1331, Father John de Kell being then prior. In this instance, also, the monastic property fell into the hands of Thomas, Earl of Ormond, at the dissolution of the Irish monasteries: by such rewards did Queen Elizabeth express her approval of the crime of apostacy. It was quite usual for the members of the different Religious Orders in Ireland to make the neighbourhood of each of their ruined monasteries the centre of missionary zeal when no longer allowed to exercise their sacred duties openly owing to the Penal Laws; and while thus engaged, it is probable that the Augustinian friars, who had sought

[7-7] Alemand, p. 306, *sq.*

a refuge in the village of St. John, became victims of Puritan fanaticism when Tullagh was seized by the Cromwellians.

Mere passing reference is made to the Augustinian monastery founded at NAAS,[11] county Kildare, which we find bestowed by Queen Elizabeth upon Nicholas Aylmer, one of the royal favourites. A pious nobleman, named Francis de Feipo, built a large friary for the Hermits at SKRINE,[12] in the county Meath, A.D. 1341 ; and endowed a chantry in the same place "for the welfare of his own soul, and for the souls of his wife, his parents, and posterity." Both chantry and monastery fell into the hands of the royal agents during the reign of King Henry the Eighth. There was also a foundation made for the same Order on the "ISLAND OF ALL SAINTS,"[13] in the county Longford

The friary of DUNGARVAN[14] appears to have been the only establishment which the Augustinians possessed in the county Waterford ; although Father Lubin insists that there were houses of the order in the city of Waterford, also at Lismore and Ardmore,[15] but Alemand —whose opinion, however, we are by no means inclined to adopt unreservedly—is equally positive that the abbeys originally founded for the Canons Regular in these three latter places have been included in the Augustinian author's lengthy list. The Dungarvan monastery was erected by Thomas, Lord Offaley—Justiciary of Ireland in the year 1295—but the friars held themselves deeply indebted to the O'Briens and Magraths, who were among their principal benefactors. This house usually contained a numerous community, dispersed, of course, at the Suppression, when a grant of the monastic lands and buildings was the acknowledgment of Robert Dalton's services to the Crown in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

[11] Alemand, pp. 309-312.
[12-15] Alemand, p. 312, *sq.* Walsh, pp. 606, 537, 682.

There was an important Augustinian foundation in the city of CORK,[16] dating, probably, from the reign of Edward the First, and attributed to the De Courcys, Barons of Kinsale. In the course of time this friary became known as "the Red Abbey;" judging from the ruins, it must have been an imposing edifice originally. One of the MacCarthys obtained possession of the lands and buildings from the agents of Queen Elizabeth. The Augustinian annalists maintain that there were monasteries of their Order in the county Cork at Clonmene (founded by the O'Callaghans); at Youghal; Ross; and at a place in the barony of Castleconnel; but other writers when alluding to these establishments assign them to the Canons Regular. Moreover, in the county Kerry, a friary said to have existed at KILLAGH[17] is, likewise, claimed for the Hermits.

O'Brien of Thomond built an Augustinian monastery in the city of LIMERICK[18] sometime in the thirteenth century. It occupied a site near the commandery of the Knights Templar, and was dedicated to the Holy Cross and Our Blessed Lady. Not a trace of either of these buildings remained after the Suppression. It was at the instance of Father Aquila, General of the Hermits, that the strict Observance was revived in the Limerick friary about the year 1472; most probably the fervour of this community was soon zealously emulated by the Irish Augustinians generally. The prior of Holy Cross had, in virtue of his office, first vote in the election of the Mayor of Limerick: a privilege asserted and exercised by Father Stephen Sexton, who died in 1594. According to Father Lubin, the Hermits were established at Kilmallock and in another place in the county Limerick as well as at ADAIRE,[19] still attractive because of the picturesque ruins of the friary which John, Earl of

[16-18] Walsh, p. 389, *sq.* Lewis, vol. i., p. 428. Alemand, p. 314-317.

Kildare, built for the Augustinians there, A.D. 1315. In 1317 King Edward II. approved of the various donations of land made to this community. Although fairly well preserved, the remains of the monastery—including portion of the spacious choir and cloister—afford but a poor idea of the former grandeur of the structure. It was eventually seized by Sir Henry Wallop, whose wealth continued to increase by the confiscation of Church property in Ireland. In the same county was the friary of ANY,[20] built by some pious gentlemen, one of whom was known as "John, the son of Robert." It was during the reign of King Henry III. that the Hermits took possession of this house, which, together with the adjoining lands, fell to the share of a certain John and Mary Absley in the time of Queen Elizabeth.

No mention is made of the benefactors to whom the Augustinians were indebted for the great monastery founded for them at TIPPERARY,[21] dating from the thirteenth century. This town was destroyed by fire in the year 1329, and we are left to infer that the friary of the Hermits, also, was burned down on the same occasion. If so, it must have been restored again in the course of time; for we find that Father Donagh O'Cuyrke held the office of prior there when the agents of Henry VIII. came to seize "the church, chapter-house, dormitory, hall, two chambers (or guest-rooms), and inner chamber (within the cloister), a kitchen, the mill, the cemetery, the gardens, and a good deal of pasturage and arable land." This monastic property was all bestowed, conditionally, upon a man named Dermot Ryan. Early in the thirteenth century a friary was built for the same Order at FETHARD,[22] in the county Tipperary, but the names of the founders have not been preserved. There seems to have been some

[19-21] Archdall, pp 415, 417, 675.

informality in the deed of title, which, however, was over-ruled by King Edward I. in 1306: this monarch confirmed, moreover, all other donations made to the same community. The Augustinian writers inform us that at least two other foundations were made for their Order in the county Tipperary. But Alemand would have us believe that in setting up such claims Father Lubin—especially—merely refers to the ancient sanctuaries established in those places at a very early date by our Irish Saints, many of whom were Hermits strictly so-called; and, perhaps, not a few of them proposing to themselves to model their lives on the teaching of the great St. Augustine. However, we have seen elsewhere that most of these ancient sanctuaries throughout the country were in later ages occupied by communities of the Canons Regular.

Doubtful as the origin of its foundation may appear, the history of the Augustinian friary of GALWAY[22] is extremely interesting. Some authors are of opinion that it was built by the Berminghams of Athenry in the thirteenth century; in which case it could only have been restored in the year 1508 by Margaret, the pious wife of Stephen Lynch FitzDominic. She is said to have undertaken this good work at the suggestion of Father Richard Nangle, — an Augustinian friar subsequently appointed to the Archbishopric of Tuam, although his name does not occur in Ware's list of the Prelates who governed the See of St. Jarlath. Her husband was in Spain at the time, probably on a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James. She herself went thither later on, shortly before her holy death. When told, on his return, that the graceful steeple which he beheld rising above the Augustinian church, in a southern suburb of the city, was due to the charity of his own wife, FitzDominic knelt down on the shore, and fervently

[22] [23] Alemand, pp. 319, 322.

thanked God for having vouchsafed to her the grand inspiration. Richard De Burgo was, also, a good benefactor to this community; making the friars several valuable donations—couched in the usual formula: "for the welfare of his own soul, and for the souls of his parents and posterity," A.D. 1517. Queen Elizabeth granted the buildings and lands to the Corporation of Galway in the year 1570; but in 1603, James I. transferred them to Sir George Carew. After many strange vicissitudes, this monastery was restored to the Augustinians in 1643. In less than ten years they were again driven thence, the monastic buildings being levelled to the ground by their relentless persecutors. Allusion is next made to a number of the members of the Order in Ireland who laid down their lives for the Faith: among others, Fathers Donough O'Kennedy, Donough Sienan, Fulgentius Jordan, Redmond O'Mally, Thomas Tully and Brother Thomas Deir; but we are given no details of their martyrdom. There is special mention of a Father William Tirry, a learned and zealous friar, who had laboured secretly on the mission in Cork for several years; he was at length seized by the heretics in 1654, and publicly executed. We are told that he was nephew of the Bishop of Cork (A.D. 1622–1640); and in the intervals of his missionary duties he used to instruct the two sons of the Viscount Sarsfield.[24]

The friary which the Augustinians had at DUNMORE,[25] county Galway, is said to have been established by Walter De Birmingham, Lord Athenry. In all probability the site chosen for this foundation had been formerly occupied by an abbey built there by St. Patrick himself; or, at all events, dedicated to our national Apostle at a very early date. The memory of a holy Bishop named Fulartach, was, likewise, revered in the same

[24,27] Alemand, pp. 322-324. Walsh, p. 558.

place. Long after the Suppression, part of the monastery of the Hermits still remained and was converted into a temporary parish church. There were monastic institutions in the town of Tuam, at Clontuskert, at Gormorgan, and at Tombeola, which most writers claim for the Canons Regular; but which Father Lubin numbers among the friaries of the Augustinian Hermits.[23]

In the year 1337, the hermits of St. Augustine were introduced into BALLINROBE,[27] county Mayo. This friary, however, was not considered a foundation of very great importance. Some writers say that Tuathal O'Mally, Lord of Oules, was the chief benefactor of the community there; but evidently they rather allude to the abbey of St. John, in the same place, which dated from the eleventh century. Such as the possessions of the Augustinian friary were, they passed into the hands of an adventurer named Thomas Nolan (A.D. 1608), who is described as "one of the first of the English tavern-keepers," to exercise his calling in the Province of Connaught. Many such adventurers obtained permission to open inns "for the sale of wines and spirituous liquors," after the plunder of the native Irish had put an end to the famed *Biataghs*, or "houses of hospitality." Later on we find the monastic lands allotted to James Cuffe, secretary to Cromwell's commissioners in Connaught, and ancestor of that James Cuffe—son of Lord Tyrawley—who so bitterly opposed the Catholic claims in the time of O'Connell. The "noble O'Mallys" receive the credit of having founded another friary for the Hermits at MORRISK [28] in the same county. It was beautifully situated near the bay of Westport, over-shadowed by Croagh-Patrick. Part of the ruins still lend a sad, if picturesque, feature of their own to the scenery around.

It is said that the friary founded for the Carmelites

[28-30] Walsh, pp. 579, 563, 557.

at BORRISCARRA,[29] county Mayo, was granted to the Augustinians by Pope John XXIII., A.D. 1412. No reason is assigned for the transfer having been made; but we have already cited other instances in which the Papal authority was exercised in a similar way. This house suffered the fate of all the Irish monasteries at the Suppression; and in the reign of James I. the property formerly belonging to it was bestowed upon one of the King's favourites.

The Augustinians had also a monastery at BALLYHAUNIS,[30] county Mayo, built for them by the Nangles—who, it may be said, assumed the name of Costelloe, Ballyhaunis being in the barony of Costello. This house was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Although finally confiscated by the Crown in the year 1608, we find a community of the Hermits there again in 1641, but only for a short time; they afterwards exercised their sacred duties secretly among the Faithful of that district. The friary of INNIS-TOR-MOR [31]—so called because of the crowds of pilgrims visiting St. Becan's Well—was in the same county: it was the gift of a pious man named Thady O'Dowda to the Hermits of St. Augustine, as an act of homage to the Most Holy Trinity. When confirming this generous deed in the year 1454, Pope Nicholas V. permitted the community to keep a fishing-boat on the river close by; and to cure and sell the fish to help towards the maintenance of their friary. The names of Fathers Eugene O'Cormyn and Thady Mac-Firbiss are mentioned as the two Hermits to whom the charitable O'Dowda granted the lands of Inistormor. In the county of Mayo also was the Augustinian friary of EREW.[32] Alemand was under the impression that no such place existed in Connaught; but, as a matter of fact, there was a celebrated monastic establishment on the peninsula so called,—which stretches into Lough

[31] [32] Alemand, p. 326 *sq.* Walsh, pp. 570, 568.

Con—built for a community of friars, although it is not said expressly that they were the Hermits of St. Augustine. Many eminent Prelates were interred in the church of this monastery; special allusion being made to Thomas Barrett, Bishop of Elphin—a distinguished Theologian, who died in the year 1404. The agents of Queen Elizabeth seized this house eventually; still it is recorded that during the Cromwellian persecution some members of the community there were slain by the heretics under the most shocking circumstances; but neither in this instance are we informed whether these Confessors were members of the Augustinian Order.[33]

It was through the generosity of the O'Dowda family, also, that the Augustinians were enabled to establish themselves at ARDNARY[34] in the county Sligo. The site of the monastery was on the banks of the river Moy, not far from the castle of the O'Dowdas. We are told that this castle was often assailed and captured by the Burkes; but as frequently retaken by the loyal followers of the ancient Irish Sept. In later times, A.D. 1586, a great battle was fought here between the Burkes of Mayo themselves and the English under the notorious Sir Richard Bingham. Burke's Scotch auxiliaries were surprised, and put to the sword without mercy. Some interesting remains of the monastic church of Ardnary are still to be seen on the banks of the Moy. Ruins of another Augustinian friary are conspicuous on the same river at BENNADA,[35] also in the county Sligo. This house was under the invocation of "Corpus Christi," and owed its origin mainly to the efforts of a Father Charles, himself a member of the Order, A.D. 1423. The buildings appear to have been spacious; still the plunderers of monastic property in the time of James the First are said not to have

[33] Walsh, p. 509. [34 35] Archdall, pp. 625-628.

ANGELUS A S. JOSEPH ANGLUS IN COMITATU HEREFORDIÆ NAT.
PONTANÆ AB ACATHOLICIS IN CARCEREM CONJECTUS AC MU
TIBARIAM TENTATUS LUCULENTUM PRÆBUIT FIDEI TESTIMU
HOC UNUS VESANIS HÆRETICOR RATIONIB' RESPONENS CUM DI
IMMACULATAM ESSE MORENO NOVATORUM ORDIBUS SCATERE
DEIPARAM ESSE CONCEPTAM DEUM AUCTOREM

BROTHER ANGELUS OF ST. JOSEPH, O.D.C. (p. 237)

profited greatly by their sacrilegious seizure of this friary. Father Lubin assures us that the Hermits had yet another foundation in the same county at BALLYSADARE,[36] occupying the site—a very charming one, according to the "Four Masters," on the river Uncian, "the beautiful stream of the salmon,"—of a great abbey established there in the seventh century by St. Fechin. Other writers, however, say that this monastery belonged to the Canons Regular; and inform us, moreover, that there was in the same place, close by, a community of nuns following "the Rule of St. Augustine." These writers also state that there was a flourishing community in the monastery of Ballysadare when suppressed during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. While severely censuring the Augustinian authors for trying to justify such claims, even accusing them of corrupting the Irish names of places, we find Alemand himself identifying Ballysadare with Ballindune—not by any means the first serious mistake of this kind he has made in his work on our ancient monasteries. Father Lubin further assures us that there were friaries of the Order at Roscommon, Athlone, and Derane in the county Roscommon; but we have already explained in what sense this writer would, probably, have us understand the nature of the title of the Hermits to foundations more generally ascribed to the Canons Regular.

However, in a number of cases, Father Lubin positively asserts that the monasteries alluded to were originally established for the Augustinian Friars; yet without assigning the probable date, or the names of the founders: thus, with regard to the monastery of MUCKNOE,[37] on the lake of the same name in the county Monaghan, we are merely told that many distinguished persons were interred in the adjoining church. He speaks, too, of a house founded for the Hermits at

[36] [37] Alemand, p. 327 *sq.* Walsh, pp. 642, 613.

CLONES,[38] county Monaghan, where there was certainly an abbey of the Canons Regular ; and mentions several other monasteries supposed to have been built for the Augustinians in different parts of the same county. If, however, other authors are not inclined to acknowledge more than twenty-four or twenty-six foundations of the Irish Hermits of St. Augustine, all freely admit the probability of there having been several houses, at least, of which no satisfactory account has come down to us ; owing to the causes so frequently alluded to in the course of the present narrative.

We have said that it was not until after the suppression of the English monasteries, that the Augustinian friaries in Ireland were formed into an independent Province,—A.D. 1556 ; nor is there any record of the nuns of this Order having been introduced into the country before the later Penal Times, when a convent was opened for them in DUBLIN,[39] and another in the city of GALWAY.[40] A raid was made on the latter house in the year 1731 by the Mayor of Galway, who reported to the authorities that the nuns had all escaped ; he only found the servants there. About the same time (A.D. 1739), the Irish Augustinians founded a monastery in Rome, which proved of vast service to the Province in after years. The part taken by the Hermits in the great struggle for the Faith, from the suppression of their homes throughout the country until Catholic Emancipation, was, we may add, well worthy of the traditions of the heroic zeal of their predecessors in former times.

[38] Alemand, p. 330. Walsh, p. 613. [39] [40] Burke, p. 750.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE ORDER OF CARMEL.

It is merely to complete this series of brief notices on the ancient monasteries of Ireland, that we deem it necessary to include an account of the Irish Carmelites in our narrative, having already treated the subject at length in another place.[1] Indeed, it was the encouraging appreciation of his former work that enabled the author to attempt the somewhat difficult task—so hard did he find it at times to reconcile the conflicting statements of different annalists—of establishing more fully the nation's beautiful title of "A Second Thebaid." However, although the facts about to be set forth in this chapter have, for the greater part, been submitted to the public in "Carmel in Ireland," we thought it advisable to insert them here in another form; and so as to comprise passing reference to the various foundations made by the Teresian, or Discalced Carmelites.

At a certain remote epoch in their history, the members of the Order of Carmel were monks, strictly so called; and not Mendicant Friars, as they now rank in the Church owing to the action of several Sovereign Pontiffs. Still further back, they had led the eremitical mode of life in Eastern deserts. Their origin is familiar to Catholics—to Christians generally, so great the influence of the spirit of Carmel in every age. A popular and well-established tradition assigns the Prophet Elias as the first Founder of the Order, the proofs of this claim

[1] "Carmel in Ireland: with Supplement." (New Edition: Dublin, 1903).

being far more satisfactory than those usually adduced by historians in evidence of facts of a similar kind. Even the names of Doctors of the Church—such as Saints Basil and Chrysostom—are quoted to lend their authority to the position of the Carmelite writers in tracing the descent of their Institute from the glorious Thesbite, who flourished about nine hundred years before the coming of Our Lord. Hostile critics have ever persisted in misunderstanding the nature of the claim; but the effect of the many controversies, which inevitably arose, was only to strengthen the ancient tradition, and to increase to a marvellous degree the roll of those professing themselves clients of Carmel's Queen. For, from the beginning—centuries before they had received their first written Rule—the Carmelites were known as "Brothers of the Blessed Virgin." This distinctive title they owed to their special devotion to the Mother of God, which had been transmitted in the Order, generation after generation, from the Hermits dwelling on Mount Carmel at the time of the birth of the Lord; they themselves having inherited the same spirit of filial piety from their predecessors on the Holy Mount—back to the days of St. Elias, whose vision of that cloud rising from the sea is taken as a type of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception.[2]

The original Carmelite Rule, written in Greek, was confirmed by John, Patriarch of Jerusalem, A.D. 412; and simply comprised the pious customs observed by the Hermits of Carmel even from the time of the Prophets. According to this Rule was governed the great Carmelite monastery of St. Anne's, near Jerusalem, wherein St. Palladius and several of his companion missionaries acquired that spirit of asceticism which they were destined to introduce into Ireland. However,

2 "Carmel in Ireland," ch. i. See authorities quoted above, chap. i. *Histoire du Clergé*, vol. ii., pp. 292-354. Alemand, p. 331, *sq.*

it was not until the year 1207 that St. Brocard obtained from the Blessed Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, a Latin summary of the ancient Rule, containing everything essential for the formation of the characteristic spirit of a true descendant of those famed Hermits of Carmel. Some thirty years later on, when the Saracen persecutions began to rage in the East, the Carmelites came over to Europe. Their Rule was then further modified by Pope Innocent IV., at the prayer of St. Simon Stock—to whom, also, the Blessed Virgin granted the wondrous favour of the Brown Scapular. And about the same epoch the Carmelites were formally constituted one of the Orders of Mendicant Friars, their numbers having, in the meantime, multiplied to almost an incredible extent throughout the entire world. The Rule, thus finally sanctioned, came to be known as the "Primitive Carmelite Rule;" and the mitigations afterwards permitted—without being obligatory upon any particular member of the Order—by Pope Eugene IV., A.D. 1431, implied but a comparatively slight relaxation of the former rigorous mode of life. This action was taken by Pope Eugene at the instance of many Bishops anxious to have the Carmelites in their dioceses, yet fearing that the great austerities practised by them should hinder their spirit of zeal; nor did the dispensations so granted interfere at all with what was absolutely needful to attain the object of the Carmelite's vocation.

Nevertheless, as early as the year 1451, those mitigations were, in a considerable measure, voluntarily renounced in most monasteries of the Order. This Reform was due to the fervour of the Blessed John Soreth, who had, moreover, the privilege of obtaining the canonical institution of the Carmelite nuns: for one of whom God reserved the greater glory of restoring the Rule to its full primitive rigour. St. Teresa's

success in this respect, during the course of the following century (A.D. 1515–1582), was such as to cause the whole world to marvel; and men are wondering at it still. The burden of her trials and sufferings—inseparable from an enterprise of the kind—was shared by St. John of the Cross (A.D. 1542–1591). The entire Order of Carmel did not adopt the Reform thus happily inaugurated—the Teresian, or Discalced Carmelites being formed into a distinct Congregation eventually; but all who wore Her sacred habit gloried in what these two great Saints had done in honour of Carmel's Queen.

However, we are to remember that it was the Carmelites observing the Primitive Rule who first came to Ireland, long before that dispensation had been granted by Pope Eugene. And it may be said that the tradition of their austere mode of life is one of the reasons assigned for the enthusiastic welcome given to the Teresian Friars, as their successors, on the advent of these religious to the country early in the seventeenth century. Indeed, St. Simon Stock himself was still living when the first colony of "White Friars"—as they were more popularly called—came to Ireland; their spirit of prayer and zeal soon obtaining for them a permanent place in the hearts of the fervent Irish people; while the doctrine of the Brown Scapular, which they preached, made them all the more beloved by those who had ever such confidence in the power of the Blessed Virgin.

It cannot be stated, for certain, how many monasteries were founded for the Carmelites throughout the country. Some writers say that there must have been over thirty; others limit the number to twenty-five. In the present instance, also, want of more precise information is entirely owing to the destruction of the monastic archives wherein were preserved the Registers, and all other important documents. A Carmelite foundation is said to have been made in Ireland as early as the year 1224;

but the Province was not canonically erected until 1303, being the eleventh established by the Order after the confirmation of the Primitive Rule by Pope Innocent the Fourth. By a singular coincidence, the same place is occupied among the Provinces of the Teresian Reform by that of the Irish Discalced Carmelites.

It seems that there was some difficulty about the opening of the first Carmelite friary in the city of DUBLIN,[3] arising from a dispute over the plot of ground which had been granted as a site for the new monastery. King Edward the First himself interposed on behalf of the religious; and Sir Robert Baggot lent valuable assistance in furthering the pious project, if he was not actually the founder of this house, as some writers say. It was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. From the year 1274 the community received most generous support from the citizens: King Edward III. (A.D. 1335); Richard II. (A.D. 1394); Henry IV.—who provided for the perpetual maintenance of the chantry—(A.D. 1400); and a gentleman named John Beck being among the chief benefactors of the friars. Important Chapters of the Order were held here on various occasions: under Father John Suggdaeus in 1320; under the renowned David O'Bugey; and again in 1367 under Father John Searle. The Irish Parliament met in the great hall of this monastery in the year 1333, when a tragic event, resulting in the death of one of the members, occurred at the opening session. A Carmelite Archbishop occupied the See of Dublin in 1399—Richard Northall, who became Lord Chancellor of Ireland later on. His successor, Thomas Cranley, was another distinguished member of the Order; he had held the office of Chancellor to the University of Oxford before his elevation to the Episcopate. Many learned White Friars were members of the Dublin community; and several of them took

[3] Archdall, p. 213.

an active part in the movement to secure a University for Ireland in the year 1475.[4] Father William Kelly was prior of this house at the time of the Suppression (A.D. 1543), when all the monastic property passed into the hands of Nicholas Stanehurst; but Sir Francis Aungier was in possession during the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and in 1732 a theatre stood on the site of the ancient monastery—to be replaced, however, at a still more recent date by the present church of the Carmelites of White Friar Street.

But long before even the Cromwellian epoch, the glory of Carmel, in all its pristine splendour, was revived in Dublin by a community of the Teresian Friars, whose first members, two fervent young priests, are best known as Fathers Edward of the Kings and Paul of St. Ubaldus (A.D. 1625). The labours, the trials, and the victories of these two zealous Discalced Carmelites are recorded in another place, where the story of their persevering struggle is told; and it is shown how they succeeded in accomplishing the object which they had at heart on setting out from the college of their Order at Louvain: to establish a branch of the Teresian Reform in their native land.[5] This they happily achieved, notwithstanding the various persecutions raised against Catholics from the time of Charles I. until after the Restoration; several of the Discalced Carmelites of the Dublin community having, in the meanwhile, laid down their lives for the Faith. Among these heroic Confessors was Brother Peter of the Mother of God, a holy lay-brother whose edifying life and death proved so efficacious in encouraging the Catholics of Dublin to resist their fanatical persecutors (A.D. 1643.)

A Carmelite monastery of considerable importance was erected at KILDARE[6] by William (or Richard) de Vesci,

[4] "Hibernia Dominicana," p. 193.
[5] "Carmel in Ireland: with Supplement."
[6] Archdall, p. 331.

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A.D. 1290. Like most houses of the White Friars in Ireland, it was popularly known as "the Abbey"—a title which, as already explained, seems to have been regarded as a term of endearment among the Irish people. The present Carmelite friary of Kildare is supposed to occupy the site of the original edifice. Father Ralph Kelly, afterwards Archbishop of Cashel, was a member of the community there. He it was who fearlessly rebuked King Edward III. for having dared to trespass on certain privileges of the Episcopate; but his determined action was the subsequent cause of much suffering to the zealous Prelate, whose memory, likewise, prejudiced critics try to vilify. However, not alone was he a learned writer on Theology and Canon Law, but he gained greatest renown by the holiness of his life and by his spirit of true patriotism (A.D. 1361).[7] Another celebrated Carmelite of the friary of Kildare was Father David O'Bugey, known in history as "the light and glory of Ireland," by reason of his extraordinary sanctity and learning. He discharged all the important offices to which he had been elected with greatest prudence and zeal; but he could never be prevailed upon to accept any of the various dignities offered to him by successive Pontiffs and Kings: he deemed such honours incompatible with the state of a poor friar. His advice, however, was always at the disposal of those seeking his aid; for he was frequently consulted on matters of vital importance to the welfare of both Church and State in Ireland. He flourished from about the year 1320, dying, at length, "full of years and honours." His remains were interred within the cloister at Kildare.

The friary of CLONCURRY,[8] county Kildare, was built for the Carmelites in the year 1347 by a gentleman named John Roche, who had succeeded in securing the King's permission to undertake this meritorious

[7] Walsh, p. 203 *sq.*, 487. Ware's "Bishops," p. 478, *sq.*

work. A great battle was fought close by in 1405, between the English and the native Irish Septs, when the church and monastery of the Carmelites were destroyed by fire. But the buildings were afterwards restored by the people themselves; and the religious life was led there fervently until the 18th of January, 1544—the date of the plunder of this friary by the agents of King Henry the Eighth. The possessions of the community were first bestowed on William Dickson to be held by military service; but during the reign of Queen Elizabeth they were handed over to Richard Slane at a mere nominal rent; and now only a few ruined walls in the graveyard of Cloncurry mark the site of this once famous monastery.

It was through the good offices of William de Londres, Archbishop of Dublin, that the White Friars were enabled to open a house at ATHBOY,[9] county Meath. He obtained the necessary sanction of Parliament, on the 17th of October, 1317, to offer the Carmelites a site for their proposed monastery and church. Among the Bishops of Meath there was a member of the Order named William de Paul, appointed by Pope John XXII., and consecrated at Avignon, A.D. 1327.* This Prelate was distinguished for his great virtue as well as for his learning: he had taken the Doctor's degree both at Oxford and in Paris; and had been elected superior of the English and Scotch Carmelites at the General Chapter held in Genoa, A.D. 1324. His death occurred in the year 1349. A Chapter of the Order met at Athboy in 1325, presided over by Father John Boxam, superior of the Irish Carmelites, apparently. In 1372 the members of this community were sued for not having complied with certain legal formalities on receiving a donation of land. Another Chapter was convened at Athboy in 1409; the next record of this

[8-9] Walsh, pp. 480-590. * NOTE: To Pope John XXII. was revealed the great favour known as the "Sabbatine Indulgence."

house being that of its suppression in the time of King Henry the Eighth, who bestowed it upon a man named Thomas Casey. Some ruins of the ancient church still remain.

It is very probable that the foundation made for the Teresian Friars at Athboy during the reign of Charles I. was merely a restoration of the monastery built for their predecessors there in the fourteenth century. For at least four of the original Carmelite friaries were purchased for the religious of the Teresian Reform, who received special Papal sanction to avail themselves of their benefactors' generosity in this respect. At all events the Discalced Carmelites are known to have laboured zealously at Athboy until the Puritan persecution, when they were obliged to seek refuge in the woods and caves : not that the fact of their having to do so implied less activity in the discharge of their missionary duties during the Penal Times.

The monastery of the White Friars at ARDEE,[10] county Louth, dated from the reign of King Edward the First, and owed its origin to the piety of a certain Ralph Pippard. It appears to have been burned down by the soldiers of Robert Bruce in the year 1315 ; a number of helpless men, women, and children perishing in the church on that occasion. But in this instance, also, the injury done to the sacred edifice and cloister was speedily repaired by the Faithful ; and a Chapter assembled there under Father John Suggdaeus in 1320 ; while again, in 1489, the Irish Carmelites met at Ardee to discuss matters of importance relating to the welfare of their Province. When the plague was raging in Drogheda, A.D. 1504, Octavian de Palatio, Archbishop of Armagh, convoked a Synod at Ardee, the meetings being held in this monastery. A religious named

[10] Alemand, p. 234. See "Carmel in Ireland : with Supplement," for references made to the Discalced Carmelites.

Patrick was prior when the house fell into the hands of those sent to plunder the community by the agents of Henry the Eighth. Its after-history, however, is extremely interesting; for, undoubtedly, the dilapidated buildings were secured for the Discalced Carmelites sometime in the year 1638. A Father Michael, and a student called Brother Columbanus had previously come to take charge of the ruined monastery; and soon a flourishing community of the Teresian Friars were perpetuating there the traditions of the Carmelites who first came to Ireland, living according to the austere Primitive Rule. These two religious had themselves a very distinguished, if eventful career on the Irish mission; and, afterwards, on the Continent whither they were obliged to betake themselves during the Cromwellian persecution. There is a precious, and most interesting relic of this monastery still preserved in the present college of the Discalced Carmelites at Dublin: an historical work which once belonged to the library of the Teresian Friars at Ardee. Probably it was given to one of the Fathers on his leaving Belgium for Ireland, sometime in the year 1640.

The Carmelites had another foundation in the county Louth at DROGHEDA.[11] But beyond the fact of its having been built by the citizens themselves during the course of the thirteenth century and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin—the site chosen being on the banks of the Boyne—nothing is known concerning the history of this monastery. It is by no means improbable, however, that this house, also, was one of the four "Old Abbeys" occupied by the Discalced Carmelites in after years; if so, its later annals are quite as interesting as those of the Teresian friary at Ardee. For the Discalced Fathers were established in Drogheda at an early

[11] Archdall makes no mention of this house. (pp. 452-460). Ware, "Antiquities," p. 90. Alemand, p. 234. Lewis, vol. i., p. 502.

date after their arrival in Ireland; and most of their number who became distinguished for their zeal throughout the Puritan persecution had studied for the priesthood in the college of their Province founded in that place. The celebrated Teresian Theologian—Father Laurence of St. Teresa—was a native of Drogheda, and joined the Order of Carmel there. And the two glorious Discalced Carmelite Confessors—Father Thomas Aquinas, a Jesu, and Brother Angelus of St. Joseph—were both members of this community. The latter was still a young student when arrested for the "crime" of being a monk, after the city had been taken by the Puritans. He escaped, but was seized again almost immediately; and this time was put to a cruel death, because they could not prevail on him either by threats or bribes to deny his Faith and the monastic profession (A.D. 1642.) Father Thomas Aquinas was a very successful preacher whose zeal among the persecuted Catholics soon excited the bitterest hatred of the Puritan fanatics. He was at length constrained to deliver himself into the hands of his enemies in order that he might shield those with whom he had heretofore found refuge from his persecutors' vengeance. Without so much as the pretence of trial, he was hanged outside Drogheda; his remains being afterwards laid to rest within the ruins of the Augustinian friary by the devoted Catholics of the city (A.D. 1642.)

About the time the Carmelites throughout Europe resumed the wearing of their beautiful white mantle—which had been interdicted in the East, owing to the petty jealousy of the Saracen Knights—a monastery was established for the Order at LEIGHLIN-BRIDGE,[12] county Carlow, by a member of the Carew family: King Henry III. being then on the English Throne. The site chosen was extremely picturesque; the various

[12] Archdall, p. 38.

buildings solid and spacious; and generous provision was made for the support of the community by pious benefactors—Kings Edward III. and Richard II., being also well disposed towards the friars there. It was plundered during the reign of Henry VIII.; and in the following century became the centre of military operations, when the waters of the river Barrow reflected "naught save matchlocks and iron skull-caps," instead of the cowls and scapulars of the religious passing to and fro, silently, in discharge of the sacred duties of their state. A Discalced Carmelite missionary, named Father Agapitus of the Holy Ghost—who laboured zealously in the several counties of Leinster while Cromwell was still in power—has left us a thrilling narrative of what the exercise of the ministry implied for the Irish priest in those dread times. Yet it was not their trials and sufferings—hunted like wolves, through forests, on the hills, and over treacherous moors—that grieved those heroic missionaries at all: it was the sight of so many homes of holiness, such as the friary of Leighlin-Bridge, desecrated by the godless soldiery, whose ribald songs now echoed everywhere in the cloisters once hallowed by voices consecrated in the service of prayer.

Under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, the Carmelite friary of LITTLE-HORTON,[13] county Wexford, dated from about the end of the fourteenth century, when it was built by the members of the Furlong family. The property of this community was granted to Sir John Davis at the Suppression; but afterwards it appears to have passed into the hands of a man named Francis Talbot.

Mere mention is made of the friary which the Carmelites had at ARDNACRANNA,[14] county Westmeath. It is supposed to have been established in the course of the

[13] Archdall, p. 747. "Hoartown,"—Walsh, p. 707.
[14] Alemand, p. 336.

fourteenth century by Robert Dillon, the founder of a Dominican monastery in the same county.

In the King's County, there was a Carmelite foundation at FRANKFORD,[15] or Kilcormic. This house was a gift to the Blessed Virgin from Aedh (Odo) O'Molloy, chief of the sept, who died on the feast of St. Remigius, A.D. 1454; and was buried in the church of the monastery. Father Edward Bracken's death occurred there in 1467: he had held the office of prior at Frankford for some time. Other interesting obits are to be found in the "Kilcormic Missal," written in the same friary by Dermot O'Flanagan of the Carmelite monastery of Loughrea, when Father Edward O'Higgins was prior of Frankford (A.D. 1457). This most interesting MS. is still preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin. After this friary had been seized and plundered by the royal agents, the monastic lands were granted to Robert Leister, one of the favourites of King Henry the Eighth.

Some writers are of opinion that the friary of KNOCKTOPHER,[16] county Kilkenny, was the first foundation made for the Carmelites in Ireland, the year 1356 being the date assigned. But it is quite certain that many, if not by far the greater number of the monasteries of the Irish White Friars, were built in the thirteenth century—one, probably, having been founded as early as the year 1224. James, Second Earl of Ormond—head of the Butler family—was the principal benefactor of the Knocktopher friary, which according to several authors, was under Our Lady's patronage; but Alemand assures us that it was dedicated to Saint Saviour, whose famous shrine in the church there attracted great crowds of pilgrims from all parts of Ireland. We are informed, moreover, that this

[15] Ibidem, p. 335. "Royal Irish Academy Transactions," pt. x., June, 1901.

[16] Alemand, p. 334. Walsh, p. 500.

monastery became a most important centre of the Irish Carmelites; although so little is known of its history. It seems that Father Henry Brown was prior there in 1396; and that the same office was held by a Father William in the year 1543, when the inevitable allusion is made to its suppression. Several Carmelite Bishops occupied the See of Ossory, among them Richard Northall, of whom mention has already been made; and Thomas Peverill, or Pierevill (A.D. 1393), who had a great reputation for sanctity, and was, later on, translated to Landaff in Wales, and eventually to the diocese of Worcester. The remains of this holy Prelate were interred in the Carmelite church at Oxford (A.D. 1418), which stood close to the University wherein he himself had taken his Doctor's degree. Sir Patrick Barnwall got a grant of the lands and buildings of St. Saviour's at the dissolution of the Irish monasteries. Some interesting ruins of this ancient friary still remain. It does not appear that the Carmelites had a foundation in the city of Kilkenny from the beginning; but there was a flourishing community of the Teresian Friars there at the time of the great Catholic Confederation; and their monastery gained much notoriety owing to the fact of Father John Rowe—Provincial of the Discalced Carmelites—having been called upon to take a very prominent part in public affairs. Of course it shared the fate of the other Teresian friaries during the Cromwellian persecution, the members of the community being driven into exile for the most part; others, no doubt, eventually receiving the Martyr's palm and crown.

The Carmelite friary of RATHMULLEN,[17] county Donegal, seems to have been the most important foundation made for the White Friars in the North of Ireland. Its origin may be traced to the piety of MacSweeny

[17] Archdall, (Ed. 1876), vol. i., p. 213, *sq.* Lewis, vol. ii., p. 505.

Fannid, early in the fourteenth century, who placed it under the protection of our Lady. Picturesquely situated on Lough Swilly, this monastery is frequently referred to by the Annalists in connection with that memorable episode in Irish history known as "the Flight of the Earls" (A.D. 1607.) Portion of the ancient friary remains; and the interesting ruins of the Gothic church are still fairly well preserved; so that one might easily fancy the sacred edifice surrounded by those austere buildings contained within the cloister: the great hall and library; the cells, and spacious refectory; and the other apartments included in the plan usually adopted in the construction of the Carmelite monasteries throughout Ireland. Among the Carmelite Bishops appointed to Sees in the North, we find the name of William Quaplod, an Englishman, chosen for the diocese of Derry. However, we are merely informed that he had graduated at Oxford, and died in 1422—three years after his consecration. Other English Carmelites were nominated to Irish Bishoprics, which only served as Titular Sees; and it is doubtful whether these Prelates ever came to the country at all. Thus, there were at least three White Friar Bishops of Dromore—David Cherbury, A.D. 1431, Thomas Bradley, A.D. 1450; and Richard Mysius, A.D. 1457—who do not appear to have governed that diocese in person.[18]

Very little is known of the history of the various Carmelite friaries established in the south of Ireland; hardly anything beyond the fact of their having been founded either in the thirteenth or early in the fourteenth century; and of their having been all suppressed by the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. There was certainly a house of the Order in the city of CORK,[19] which dated from sometime in the fourteenth century; and in the county of the same name the De

[18] Compare "Ware's Bishops" (Harris), p. 260, *sq.* [19-21] Walsh, pp. 390, 385, 303.

Barrys are said to have built a monastery for the White Friars at CASTLELYONS.[20] The Carmelites of KINSALE,[21] also in the county Cork, held themselves indebted for their friary to Robert FitzRichard Balrayne; or at least he was one of their most generous benefactors (A.D. 1350). On the north side of that town a few crumbling walls still bear witness to the barbarous spirit of those who plundered this monastery during the reign of King Henry the Eighth. The Discalced Carmelites established themselves at Kinsale in after ages; and laboured very successfully on the mission there during the Penal Times. For the fervent practice of the Primitive Rule of Carmel, although implying the contemplative life as the principal part of his vocation, by no means hinders—is rather an incentive to—the true White Friar's missionary zeal. In all probability the Teresian monastery of Kinsale was one of the religious establishments first raided by that ruthless band of Puritan adventurers, licensed by Parliament to seize the property of Catholics in different parts of Ireland—especially in the South. So great was their hatred of priests and friars, that their companions elsewhere, after having put one of our Irish Confessors to death, boasted that they had "cut him in pieces as small as flesh for the pot."

The monastery of THURLES[22] seems to have been the only Carmelite foundation made in the county Tipperary. It dated from the year 1300, having been erected by the Butler family in honour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Part of the ruined church is still to be seen, but, of course, affords no idea of the magnificent structure seized at the Suppression by Thomas, Earl of Ormond. This nobleman, in his sacrilegious avarice, would thus deprive Father Donagh O'Howleghan, the prior, and his community of the home provided for

[22] Alemand, p. 336.

the White Friars of Thurles in the beginning by the pious ancestors of the Ormonds.

In the county Limerick, the O'Molloys founded a Carmelite monastery at BALLYWILLIAM[23]; and the Roches one at BALLINEGALL,[24] both dating from early in the fourteenth century. Father O'Daugane was prior of the latter house at the time of the Suppression: he and the other members of his community having been driven forth, in order that the trustees of Trinity College, Dublin, might increase the revenues of an institution primarily designed to foster the new heresy in Ireland. No mention is made of a foundation of the Order in the City of Limerick prior to that of the Discalced Carmelites, which dated from the reign of Charles the First. It is not improbable that the Teresian friary there was plundered in one of those Puritan raids; but it is quite certain that the Discalced Carmelites were living in community in this city again in still later times. From a document written by one of the Teresian Friars of Limerick (and included in the Supplement to "Carmel in Ireland"), we learn that the Provincial Chapter was held in their monastery there; although the assembled Fathers could hear the roar of the cannon trained by the enemy against the city walls; and expected hourly that they themselves should be at the mercy of the hostile soldiery, in which case they had little hope of escaping the halter or sword (A.D. 1649). In face of evidence of this kind, it is surprising to find Alemand commit himself to those erroneous statements which he has made concerning the establishment of the different friaries of the Irish Discalced Carmelites. This writer might easily have obtained accurate information relative to the state of the Order in Ireland by applying

[23-24] "Appendix Monastica," (Burke), p. 752. We are told, moreover, that Nellan O'Molloy established a Carmelite monastery at MILLTOWN county Limerick. Walsh, p. 531.

to any of the numerous monasteries of the several Provinces in France, where many of the Irish Fathers were well known to their brethren in Religion—as we are assured by various contemporary authors.

The White Friars had three foundations in the county Mayo: one on CLARE-ISLAND,[25] established by the O'Malleys —ancestors of the renowned Grace, or Granu-Weal ("Graine-ni-Uhaile") —and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin (A.D. 1224). This monastery was eventually transferred, by Papal authority, to the Cistercians of Abbeyknockmoy in the county Galway. Then there was the Carmelite friary of BORRISCARRA,[26] which Pope John XXIII. granted to the Augustinians in 1412. And that of BALLINISMALE,[27] built by the Prendergast family in the year 1356. The O'Gara is said to have founded a monastery for the White Friars at KNOCKMORE[28] in the county Sligo; while in the county Galway, besides the well-known "Abbey" of Loughrea, there was a house of the Order at CREVEBANE,[29] generously supported by the De Burgos: after the Suppression this friary was bestowed by Queen Elizabeth on the municipal authorities of Athenry. Sometime during the fourteenth century the head of the Birmingham family, Lord Athenry, built a Carmelite monastery at PALLICE,[30] which passed into the possession of a man named John Rawson in the year 1589. Within the city of GALWAY,[31] also, the White Friars had a house of which the De Burgos were the principal benefactors—the only item of information that has come down to us concerning this foundation.

The Discalced Carmelites had an important house in the city of Galway in the reign of Charles the First. And as in the case of the Teresian Friars of Kilkenny,

[25-31] Walsh, pp. 564, 563, 558, 652, 454, 467, 457. The O'Flaherty is said to have founded a house for the White Friars at BALLYNAHINCH, also in the county Galway (A.D. 1356). Walsh, p. 451.

this community receives a good deal of attention from the Annalists ; because of their position when strained relations are said to have existed between the Papal Nuncio, Rinuccini, and many of the Confederate Catholics. We ourselves have had occasion in another place, to explain away—on the evidence of contemporary Teresian Carmelites—what certain writers would have us regard as the cause of much bitterness among the contending parties ; and to show that not rancour, but an edifying spirit of fraternal charity animated those said to have been so hostilely opposed concerning the various points at issue. However, the controversy—such as it was—had hardly yet been brought to a close before the Discalced Carmelites of Galway shared the fate of the other religious communities in that city at the time of the Puritan persecution : some of the friars escaping to the Continent, there to wait an early opportunity of returning to the labours of the mission in their native land ; others contriving to discharge their sacred duties secretly among the Faithful of the surrounding districts ; and not a few being cast into prison, often a far worse penalty than even the most violent death.

But, by all accounts, the friary established at LOUGHREA[32] county Galway, in the year 1300, was the principal Carmelite foundation in the West of Ireland. It owed its origin to Richard De Burgo—of the same family as that apostate Earl of Clanricarde, who obtained a grant of the monastic lands and buildings at the Suppression. Nevertheless, it was owing to the action of a Catholic member of this family—taken at the urgent representation of a number of friends of the Teresian Friars—that the ruined monastery passed again into the possession of the Order of the Blessed Virgin during the course of the seventeenth century. A certain rent, however, was demanded for the dilapidated

[32] Archdall, p. 293.

buildings and an adjoining plot of ground ; a condition with which the generous benefactors of the Discalced Carmelites were only too happy to comply. The Earl of Clanricarde, who interested himself in the welfare of the new community, soon took the field, in person, against the notorious Sir Charles Coote, the Parliamentarian President of Connaught ; and an eventful campaign ensued.[33] Meanwhile, the Regular Life, according to the Primitive Rule of Carmel, was led in the friary at Loughrea as fervently as if the very existence of the Teresian Fathers there did not depend on the success of that final appeal which had been made to arms. The eventual fate of these religious was similar to that of the community dwelling in the Abbey when plundered by the agents of King Henry the Eighth ; only Cromwell's system of " thoroughness " in uprooting the Catholic Faith and Monasticism in Ireland was carried out in such wise that not many of the friars escaped to labour in secret among the Faithful in Loughrea and the neighbouring districts. Still, a few did succeed in evading the vigilance of their persecutors until the Restoration epoch, when we find them, or their successors on the mission, occupying the ancient monastery again down to the time of the battle of Aughrim (A.D. 1691.)

Throughout the dread Penal Days the Teresian Friars, if not always actually living within the ruins, were to be found close by—struggling amid every trouble and privation (often forced to flee to the woods at the priest-hunter's approach) to perpetuate the zeal of those Carmelites who had come to that town by the " Gray Lake " long before the granting of the Mitigation to the Order by Pope Eugene. Eventually, they deemed it a signal favour to be suffered to build a little cabin for themselves in sight of the sad ruins

[33] " Clanricarde's Memoirs." (London : A.D. 1757).

PETRUS A S. ANDREA HIBERNUS, EX HERETICIS CAPTUS, CARCERE
GRAVESQ. ERUDITUS PERPESSUS, PER FIDEM VICIT REGNA DEP
EST, REPROMISSIONES INSANI HETERODOXORUM SAPIENTIA DIVINA
LUCE ILLITERATUS HOMO ILLUSTRATUS, FELICITER ERUDIENS DEO
MAGNIFICAT TERRA CUM TRIBULO DEOSCULATUS OBY

BROTHER PETER OF THE MOTHER OF GOD, O.D.C.

p. 232.)

of their former home; whence, but still secretly, they could continue to exercise their sacred ministry for the consolation of the pious Faithful so loyal to them in all their trials. At length, while yet those terrible laws were in full force, they erected a humble friary on part of the site of the original monastery; only portion of the ruins of the ancient church now remained. That modest structure has been utilized in the plan of the present spacious friary, completed within quite recent years. And this house serves as the present novitiate for the Irish Province of Discalced Carmelites; whereas, in the beginning, aspirants to the Order were received and professed in the Dublin monastery, after the destruction of which by the Puritan fanatics it was deemed expedient to admit the postulants at Loughrea. As late as the year 1882, the novitiate was formally re-opened there on the occasion of a Visitation made in Ireland by his Eminence, Cardinal Gotti, then General of the Discalced Carmelites. This canonical act forms a most important, as well as a very auspicious event in the interesting annals of the "Abbey."

Such are the foundations of the Irish Carmelites usually alluded to by our Annalists. It is probable, however, that there were other houses of the Order in Ireland of which all record has been lost owing to those causes which even non-Catholic writers are wont to deplore: the wholesale destruction of monastic archives either in the time of Henry VIII.; or of Queen Elizabeth; or of King James. But the struggles and sufferings of those unknown communities of White Friars at the Suppression must have been such as the Irish religious generally were called upon to endure.

Happily, within the past few years, many documents have come to light which reveal more fully the sacrifices made by the Friars of the Teresian Reform while planting anew, in all the vigour of the Primitive Observance,

the "Vine of Carmel" in Ireland.[34] Their zeal extended to the establishment of a monastery of their own on the Continent, wherein they should find a sure refuge when no longer able, for a time, to dwell in community in their native land by reason of the rigour of the Penal Laws. They wished, moreover, to utilize this house in the meantime—if necessary—as a college for their own subjects who were to succeed the missionaries already engaged in a heroic work of charity among the Irish Faithful, after those zealous priests had been worn out by the perils and privations of the outlawed friar's life. A tale of thrilling interest is gathered from these documents—chiefly a series of letters written by the Teresian missionaries themselves to their Superiors-General in Rome—affording a far clearer insight into the history of those times (A.D. 1625-1654), than the pages of a more formal narrative. Facts, mentioned casually as mere matters of course, explain in a very painful way the nature of that toleration which Catholics are said to have enjoyed in Ireland from the commencement of the reign of King Charles the First. In reality the Faithful then suffered a trying persecution.

Yet, in all their trials, what those Discalced Carmelites found it always hardest to bear was their being so often hindered observing the austere Rule of their Order in every detail. This fervent protest frequently occurs in their letters; and they earnestly implored their Superiors to pray for a nation subjected to an oppression so cruel. We are informed, too, that some of the Irish Teresian missionaries laboured in the city of London during the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. One of these—a Father Patrick of St. Brigid—has, likewise, left us an important series of letters

[34] "A Supplement to Carmel in Ireland," (Dublin, 1903). For the authentic transcript of several of these valuable documents, the author is indebted to the kindness of the Rev. Benedict Zimmerman, O.D.C., London.

dealing with contemporary affairs; and of an interest more absorbing than a thrilling romance. He had long exercised the sacred ministry in Ireland before obedience summoned him to this new field of action, where his duties lay, to a considerable extent, among the Irish Catholics in London. But what he and his brother missionaries had to endure while hunted from hiding-place to hiding-place, and during the hardships of imprisonment, was the cheerfully borne lot of every other Irish priest at that dread epoch; and their heroic perseverance was worthily emulated by their successors in a subsequent equally harrowing age.

It may safely be said that the spirit of Carmel, characteristic of the holy virgins Euphrasia and Euphrosyne about the time of our own St. Brigid, animated countless numbers of those pious Irishwomen of every rank—only too eager to practise the austerities of the monks of old, back to the days of St. Palladius. Carmelite nuns as such, however, did not appear in Ireland until sometime after the establishment of the Province of the Irish Teresian Friars. There is a doubt as to the precise date of the first foundation made for these Sisters in the country, the year 1680 being usually assigned for the opening of a convent at LOUGHREA.[35] The author of the "Hibernia Dominicana" assures us that an aunt of his own was foundress of this house; but we do not find the fact mentioned by a Discalced Carmelite writer who has recorded the names of a number of, presumably, the first Teresian nuns in Ireland. A vague tradition, impossible to verify, is to the effect that a convent, known to have existed in the city of LIMERICK early in the eighteenth century, was the mother-house of the Irish Carmelite Sisters; and it is quite certain that there were also nunneries of the Order in the cities of DUBLIN and CORK during the Penal Times.

[35] See Lewis, vol, ii., p. 317. Burke ("Appendix Monastica,") p. 752.

From a letter written by the Mother Prioress of the Carmelite convent at Bordeaux, on the 12th of May, 1726, to a Mother Teresa Bourke at Loughrea, we receive a very clear idea of the efforts then being made by the spiritual daughters of St. Teresa in Ireland to observe the Primitive Rule of Carmel even at the peril of their lives. For so much as to wear the holy habit of their Order, within those poor dwellings occupied by the sisters at Loughrea and elsewhere, was an act of high treason according to the Law. And we have seen how their humble homes were liable to be raided at any moment by scoffing officials—only too anxious for an opportunity to annoy, if not to persecute the defenceless nuns. Still, from the beginning, courageous young Irishwomen fled from the world and the security of their parents' care in order to sanctify themselves, at whatever risk, by an austere life of prayer in those lowly cloisters of Carmel.

## CHAPTER XV.

### SUPPRESSION OF THE IRISH MONASTERIES.

In the foregoing narrative we have had frequent occasion to allude to the certainty of the fate of each of those many monasteries, no matter what doubts may exist, at times, among writers concerning the origin of some particular foundation. Our object did not admit of our dwelling at length on the details of any of those tragic episodes, entering so largely into the history of the Suppression in Ireland. But throughout the country the ruins of not a few of the ancient abbeys and friaries of our Irish Thebaid are still to be seen: "the earnest facts" which tell so eloquently of what the world owed to the friars and monks in those far off times[1]; and recalling the deeds of sacrilege wrought when each of these homes of prayer and charity was given over to plunder in the name of King or Queen. And we are reminded, too—since human nature does not change, ever beset by its most pressing needs—that by the dissolution of these religious establishments the welfare of society was wantonly imperilled; for the monasteries were the centres of that form of civilization which is suitable to every age.

Fortunately, here in Ireland the influence of the monastic spirit still persevered to react beneficially on social affairs; and this owing to a cause which the originators of the Suppression failed to foresee: the Irish people were not to be deceived by the calumnies invented to discredit the Religious Orders; the perse-

[1] Carlyle, "Past and Present," as quoted in "Scoti-Monasticon," p. 8.

cution of the monks and friars only confirmed their pious clients all the more in practical allegiance to the Faith. The wholesale seizure of Church property revealed the true motives which very shame would fain dissemble as zeal in the service of an apostate King.

Indeed, so accustomed had the people of Ireland become to suffer oppression at the hands of an English monarch since the fatal epoch of the Invasion, that the confiscation of monastic lands in the time of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth was, in the beginning, regarded by many in the light of a great national wrong to be redressed, if possible, by the Irish chieftains; not until the dissolution of the English monasteries, also, showed that the King had an ulterior and still more dangerous object in view did the Catholics of Ireland grow thoroughly alarmed for the safety of the treasure of their Faith. Then their heroic constancy in defence of Truth added another striking argument to those which had already proved their country's claim to be considered "A Second Thebaid."

Still, Henry VIII. was not the first English King to suppress monastic institutions in Ireland and in England. Some writers take us back to the time of William Rufus —who had inherited his father's vices without the good qualities of the Conqueror (A.D. 1087)—to instance how abbeys were plundered in the latter country and their inmates cruelly oppressed simply to gratify the royal avarice. But it is chiefly during the reign of King Henry III. that we find the growing influence of the Religious Orders an object of envy to the English monarch and, equally, to his avaricious nobles. An agitation was, accordingly, raised against God's servants, resulting in an Act of Parliament which made it illegal to bestow a donation of land on any monastery.

The reasons assigned by Edward the First, and his immediate successor, for the suppression of "alien abbeys" appeared more specious, at least; since nearly all these

houses owed obedience to superiors residing in France, with which country England was then at war. It was insinuated that so many foreigners, both in England and in Ireland, must needs prove a danger to the interests of the British Crown. This argument was often urged again in subsequent times. Indeed, we have seen in the course of our narrative that a number of the Irish monasteries were founded by the Anglo-Norman Invaders themselves—in a spirit of true remorse, we may hope —who frequently introduced communities immediately subject to the mother-house of the particular Order in France. No notice seems to have been taken of this arrangement at first; but in time of war it was made a pretext for the confiscation of the property of "the aliens." However, the communities thus plundered appealed to Rome; and not alone was it declared that restitution should be made; but that not even the King would be justified in suppressing monasteries canonically established within his Realm, no matter what the nationality of their inmates.

Perhaps the most malicious attack of all made on the Religious Orders—especially directed against the Friars —was that of Wycliffe and his followers during the reign of Richard the Second: they entered on a crusade of calumny so as to prepare the minds of the ignorant for their own heretical opinions. In Ireland they rightly despaired of success; but their calumnies gained credence in parts of England, where discontent with the existing state of things made many reckless men eager to welcome any change likely to afford opportunities for the free indulgence of those passions which the restraints of Religion alone could subdue. The reason of Wycliffe's own bitterness against the Friars might be traced to his having met at their hands the most humiliating defeats in his impious efforts to overthrow Orthodoxy in the Christian Church. After the famed Thomas Walden, an

English Carmelite and confessor to King Henry V., his principal opponent in the Schools was Father John Kynyngham—Provincial of the English and Irish White Friars, whose holiness and learning were such as to inspire Wycliffe himself with awe when foolishly venturing to justify his heretical views before the University of Oxford.

We are prepared to find, as a matter of course, all such calumnies revived in the reign of Henry VIII. by those seconding the King's evil designs on monastic property. For, unhappily, instead of having the enormity of his conduct brought home to him by another Lanfranc —as in the case of William II.—this monarch was only encouraged by Wolsey to persevere in his crime. But in the light of modern historical research (more impartial witnesses having gained access to sources of official information denied the public in less tolerant times) the true causes of the Suppression appear. And not even the professed enemies of the Catholic Church and Monasticism may now repeat "those scandalous rumours" of bygone ages without manifesting an inexcusable ignorance of facts. Not, indeed, that these recent investigations were necessary to convince certain Protestant historians of the crying injustice of the royal decree proclaiming the monasteries dissolved. Although Tanner, among others, would still make a truly pitiful attempt to render that story of sacrilege a little less shameful; yet is he finally constrained to admit that the most urgent reason for the Suppression was the King's need of money, and the English people's "willingness to save their pockets."[2] Furthermore, this writer artlessly assures us that, according to the report of the very "Visitors," deputed by a royal commission to inquire into the truth of those calumnious charges, "Religion was right well observed in most of the monas-

[2] "Notitia Monastica," pp. 30-34.

teries"; and, generally, "that the monks were not so bad as represented." This might seem faint praise were it not that when speaking of the after-effects of the Suppression the same author grows enthusiastic in his admiration of the monastic life. Hence, in holding Henry VIII. primarily responsible for the destruction of so many religious establishments within his dominions, for base motives of his own, Catholic historians may not justly be accused of prejudice.

But it may appear strange that any monarch could thus oppress such a number of inoffensive subjects with evident impunity—for the resistance made by the people in some instances was entirely ineffectual, as we shall see. To understand this clearly, it will be interesting to dwell briefly on the circumstances that enabled Henry VIII. to substitute his own will for the Law from the time of his rupture with Rome. Among the various reasons, direct or indirect, assigned by the authors, greatest importance seems to be attached to the almost total lapse of the Feudal System in England. For by this system the exercise of the royal power was modified considerably; inasmuch as the King had to depend on the nobility for the maintenance of the prestige of his authority. In fact, it was the nobles who safe-guarded national loyalty by the example of their own submission, impressing the people with a reverential awe for the majesty of the King. At the same time they were by no means afraid to vindicate, whenever necessary, not alone the privileges of their Order, but even the rights of their humblest vassals as defined by Charter.

As might be expected, no matter what the mutual advantages of such a system, it frequently led to jealousy on the monarch's part at what sometimes appeared nothing short of an usurpation of the royal prerogatives. And the King, especially in England, did not hesitate to avail himself of every opportunity of weakening an

influence which implied a check to the absolute sway of his power. Thus, in the time of the Tudors, we find the voice of the great English lords growing gradually more faint in the management of national affairs; until during the reign of Henry the Eighth the nobles, for the most part, could only be regarded as mere courtiers depending upon the royal good pleasure for very existence as a favour. This singular falling away from all the best traditions of Feudalism may be attributed to the depopulation of England by the "Black Plague." No longer able to procure revenues from their vast estates—heretofore their lands were farmed by numerous vassals, who were virtually tenants—the nobles adopted what is known as the system of "Emparkment" (the conversion of those many farms into parks), hoping to enrich themselves by the breeding and rearing of cattle: seemingly unmindful of the great principles at stake in this cruel enterprise. For it implied much suffering among the poorer classes; being the origin, we are told, of that estrangement between the people and the nobility productive of such bitter fruit in the course of time. Henry the Seventh is said to have regarded this critical state of affairs as the death-blow to Feudalism; and in order to hasten the final issue, created a number of new Peers whose vital interest it was to know no will but his own; nor did his successor relinquish any of the advantages gained by this royal father. Even the English Church was seriously affected by such a condition of things, many Bishops and Abbots being also lords of the Realm; and, consequently, required to interest themselves in temporal affairs. Some authors would even trace the first sign of anything like a lack of devotedness to the clergy on the part of the English people to the action of certain Prelates following the example of the lay nobility in that serious matter of "Emparkment."

Here in Ireland, however, such evils were unknown

—at least outside the "Pale"—as Feudalism had never been adopted by the nation. Fosterage was the pledge of loyalty between the people and their chieftains: between the nobles and their King. It proved, for ages, a very effective means of identifying the interests of the various classes—even more permanently, we are assured, than relationship by blood. The national annals glow with the record of heroic deeds of loving devotion inspired by this system of Fosterage: instead of looking for favours, the people simply gloried in the sacrifices made in the cause of their beloved chieftains, through whom alone they paid allegiance to the reigning Irish King. But most of their sufferings arose from the wars waged with England, to resist the repeated violent efforts made to expel "the ancient race" from the land. Their persevering love—both of princes and of people—for the Religious Orders was rather due to an appreciation of the monastic state: grateful for benefits so long received, they had nothing but a heartful contempt for those who were trying to disparage the calling of the monks and friars throughout the land. Not alone did the Irish princes and chieftains found many monasteries; we have seen how they held themselves singularly blessed when their own children—often their very heirs—embraced the religious state: we have even had frequent instances of Irish Kings seeking the peace of the cloister in their declining years. We have noticed, moreover, how the profound reverence of the native Irish for the monastic Institute so won upon the sympathies of the Anglo-Norman monks living within the "Pale"—that they used to receive Irish subjects into their communities, notwithstanding the penalties incurred by this violation of an atrocious law. Cases were cited to show that certain Abbots preferred to be thus severely punished than deny admittance to the descendants of the original founders of the monasteries over which they ruled.

Hence, we need not wonder at the signal failure of the attempt made by Henry VIII. to win the Regular Clergy of Ireland to countenance the royal cause in his heretical revolt from Rome. There could be no question of compromise here. Once the nature of the King's designs became known, the monks and friars, community after community, rejected, with horror, the proposals made to them in that monarch's name: openly pronouncing Henry himself an apostate, infected with the most criminal and unchristian views. And we read that there were many glorious martyrs in Ireland during those eventful days.[3] The monastic property was everywhere seized, and freely employed to reward the favourites of the King. Happily, apostates were not very numerous in Ireland, being, for the most part, members of Anglo-Norman families whose consciences were long since dead to every sense of justice and shame by their intercourse with licentious courtiers. They followed the fashion of pretending to believe in those scandalous reports concerning the inmates of the monasteries, at the suppression of which they eagerly took their share of the sacrilegious spoils. But it was only in England these vile calumnies took hold of the popular mind, already prepared for foul charges of this kind by the crusade against Monasticism since the time of Wycliffe and the Lollards. Yet, notwithstanding the gross ignorance that prevailed among the masses—always prompt to join any movement promising license and plunder—in different parts of England, the people rose up against the royal agents in defence of the monks, their benefactors.

We have seen, too, that Henry VIII. had urgent personal motives for suppressing the Irish monasteries at whatever cost; the monks and the friars zealously warning the Faithful of the insidious efforts that were being made to lead them to the adoption of heretical

[3] See "Our Martyrs," pp. 82-219.

views. For the rest, the evidence of the "King's Visitors" proved unsatisfactory in the extreme; instead of relaxation in regular discipline, it was rather against the persevering fervour of superiors that an occasional murmur was heard from individuals whose pitiful repining was meet punishment for their having grown remiss in the struggle upon which they had entered—that between nature and grace. It was useless to cite such rare cases of discontent in the cloister, as an argument in favour of the King's project, to the Irish Faithful; they were well aware that in abandoning the world the religious did not leave human nature behind; they merely aspired to overcome its numerous weaknesses by the unceasing practice of the virtues of the monastic state. Hence, it was not the deplorable failure of the few to achieve the end of their vocation that amazed the pious people when the Visitors would fain condemn claustral life; but the grand victory of the countless many, whose holiness had heretofore been known to God alone. And by the example of such fervour they trusted, those earnest Irish Catholics, that in the time of approaching trial they themselves should likewise be enabled to conquer the cowardice of the flesh. Accordingly, as a final resort, the "Supremacy Test" was established to reduce both clergy and laity to subjection; and notwithstanding the deeds of violence—the relentless forfeiture of property, and liberty, and life—with which it was enforced, this, likewise, failed.

As for the so-called "surrendering" of Church-property in Ireland, the only authentic instances of its having taken place voluntarily are those in which after events proved that compliant courtier Prelates had been previously appointed by the King with this purpose in view. Henry deemed it politic to act in such wise; so that, in the eyes of the people of England at all events, he might appear to be influenced by better motives in

his attitude towards Rome. But here in Ireland this pretence was speedily exposed by the priests—especially by the Mendicant Friars, who had, in consequence, to bear the brunt of a fierce persecution against those loyal to the ancient Faith. These zealous Confessors were accused of being mere agents of Papal intrigue within the King's dominions; although not very long before Wolsey himself had actually petitioned the Pope for the suppression of the Friars, whom he believed hostile to his own ambitious designs. He then exercised extraordinary influence over his royal master, who needed the services of such an unscrupulous minister at times. And by representing to the Holy See the pressing necessity of reform among the Religious Orders, Wolsey had been empowered, as Apostolic legate, to visit all monastic institutions both in England and Ireland, and to report formally on the state of Regular Observance in these countries. Meanwhile, the unhappy Prelate himself received the fitting reward of his guilty weakness in complying with every royal caprice: he fell from his place in the King's favour the moment Henry found himself hampered by the presence of a courtier with Wolsey's ambitious views. Besides, the monarch no longer shrank from the world's opinion regarding his conduct; the time for dissembling was past; and by the plunder of so many monasteries he would have at his disposal the means of recompensing those devoted to his interests, whether in the Council or in the field.

The Irish chieftains had appealed to arms in the cause of Truth, and to defend their homes. A long and determined struggle ensued; for the people thronged to their standards, sustained and encouraged by the earnest exhortations of the numerous servants of God who had already laid down their lives for the Faith. Those outlawed Irish chieftains and their loyal followers

"THE OLD ABBEY," LOUGHREA. (p. 245.)

often succeeded in saving the monasteries for a time; and also in checking very effectively, in other respects, the efforts made to replenish the royal treasury in Ireland. Nevertheless, by the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the work of oppression and destruction was complete indeed, despite this heroic attempt at resistance in a spirit of true Christian chivalry. Our Annalists pay a due tribute of grateful praise to the defenders of the Irish Church in those times of persecution; and deplore the fact of such bravery having been powerless to avert the eventual fate of the abbeys and friaries throughout the land. Furnished with so few particulars of the Suppression in detail, we are not always told whether the particular religious establishment belonged to those "lesser houses," which were the first to fall into the hands of the plunderers; or to "the greater" seized later on: we are left to make what inferences we may from the official registers of such transactions—merely the inventories of the monastic property accruing so unlawfully to the Crown.

If we are to consider, for a moment, some of the effects of the Suppression we shall again appeal to the evidence of non-Catholic writers, who are to be found, unconsciously, championing the cause of Monasticism quite as enthusiastically as we could wish. In mediaeval times Religion was the sole restraint upon those who spent the greater portion of their lives in war-like pursuits, a spirit fostered even here in Ireland by disastrous tribal rivalries, as well as by the Danish and Anglo-Norman Invasions. Consequently, it became the duty of the clergy, and especially of the monks and the friars, to keep constantly before the minds of their spiritual clients the fact of their being responsible for their every action before God. The same great Truth was early instilled into the minds of the children sent for instruction to the monastic schools; in

order that in after-life far more importance might be attached to the means leading to such happiness as springs from the testimony of a good conscience, than to the fascinations of martial renown or to vain pride of race. The fruit of this training was evident in the simple piety of the Irish Faithful, no matter of what social sphere, and in the fervent practice of Christian virtue throughout the land, notably charity towards the poor and helpless, which developed into a beautiful trait in the national character.

Then, as the Irish nobles were themselves unable to discharge in person what they rightly regarded as a sacred duty, they deemed it a privilege to make God's servants their almoners; and thus the monasteries served, far more admirably than we can now conceive, the various purposes of our modern charitable institutions. By this means the State was relieved of a burden for which no adequate remedy could be found from the time of the Suppression until in these latter years the services of religious communities are being requisitioned to that end again even by those not at all favourably disposed towards the institutions of the Catholic Church. We have seen in the course of this narrative how before the dissolution of the monasteries the monks and the friars were solicitous for the wants of the needy, the infirm, the aged, the insane. And Irish Kings and Princes, renowned for their valour, considered it a far greater glory to be allowed to enrol themselves, as religious, in the royal service of Christ's suffering poor.

Briefly, everything edifying recorded as the result of Monasticism in other countries, is to be found fully confirmed in the Annals of Ireland: together with a certain touching, childlike, loving reverence for the religious habit—peculiar, apparently, to the Irish Faithful alone. Indeed, we read that it was an occasion of

joyous gratitude to the founders and benefactors of our ancient monasteries when anyone dear to them expressed a wish to take some part in those works of Christian piety; sons gladly perfecting what their fathers had begun. So we can well understand what grief and indignation spread throughout the land when it became more generally known that the patrimony of the helpless—of widows and orphans, of the destitute and afflicted—was to be seized by order of the King to be squandered by him and his profligate courtiers. Not even apologists most prejudiced in favour of Henry VIII. pretend that anything like a tithe of the plunder was devoted to the establishment of "hospitals and refuges": another specious pretext by which the King, in the beginning, endeavoured to divert the English people's attention from the true nature of his crime.

We have met with a number of pathetic instances of the final efforts made by the members of different religious communities to frustrate the purpose of the royal agents, by distributing whatever their monasteries contained among the surrounding poor. In such cases loud complaint was made by the disappointed plunderers; nor was their wrath confined to mere words of reproach. Whereas, once the monastic property had fallen into their own hands, should the distressed appeal to them for succour, heretofore so freely afforded by the friars and monks, they were regarded as criminals and severely punished by the Law. During the reign of Henry VIII. any man, woman, or even little child found destitute of fixed home and the means of livelihood incurred, by the very fact, a public flogging in the nearest market town until the blood flowed down the guilty wretch's back! Later on, the homeless poor were treated as slaves; and if their services could not be profitably employed it seems the gallows was their fate. Branding with a red-hot iron and scourging until the bones were bare,

came to be deemed, eventually, too mild a penalty for the offence of being reduced to the necessity of seeking alms.[4] It is not surprising that the Suppression should have been denounced as un-Christian by all whose hearts were not utterly hardened to the sufferings of the poor. In other times the religious themselves were sufficiently powerful to resent such inhuman measures; even to rebuke acts of harshness in a King.

But the conscience of Henry VIII. was far beyond moral influence now; and his courtiers, the partners in his crime, were equally callous to the misery caused by the action of their royal master. The latter were louder than ever in their denunciations of the monastic state, holding up the supposed disorders of the Cloister in shamelessly scandalous comedies to the ridicule of the ignorant in England. Here in Ireland the King's followers appear to have been chiefly engaged—except when hindered by the Irish Princes—in gratifying their sacrilegious greed, selling the very stones of the monasteries to increase the spoil. We have cited cases to show that the descendants of these plunderers were miserable in possession of wealth acquired by so flagrant a means; even endeavouring, although not Catholics themselves, to make some reparation for their ancestors' crimes.

Another dire effect of the Suppression was the irreparable loss to the young in the matter of education: a standing evil for several hundred years. The monasteries were, as we have seen, the only schools in those days; the Universities throughout Europe owe their fame to the learning of Masters taken from the Cloister; indeed many of them, not excluding those founded in England, were of monastic origin. Every student of mediæval history is familiar with the world's

[4] Tanner (quoted above). See "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," vol., ii., p. 515. (*Note.*)

indebtedness in this respect to the monks and friars, who have preserved for posterity whatever men prize most highly in Science, Literature and Art. "If cells of devotion"—as a Protestant writer assures us—"the monasteries were nurseries of learning:" and whenever the religious were interfered with in the exercise of their calling, ignorance among the people seems to have been regarded as quite the natural result. As a striking illustration of this historical fact, mention is made of some of the most deplorable consequences of the Danish Invasion. For the same reason the author alluded to bewails the vandalism of the Suppression, asking how could it have been needful to the welfare of the State that the priceless manuscripts in the monastic libraries should have wantonly been destroyed? He reminds us, too, that "that most useful art of printing" found its principal promoters among the monks, William Caxton himself having first exercised the same within the walls of Westminster Abbey. In each community there were always learned men, who not alone devoted themselves to the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge, but earnestly encouraged others to cultivate to the utmost talents likely to benefit the human race for all time. Hence the zeal of the younger religious to set an edifying example of diligence while attending the Universities; since this duty of labour, mental and physical, was only second to the duty of prayer: indeed, for them to labour was to pray. From the profoundest treatises on Mysticism to popular explanations of the best method for the exercise of some humble craft, nothing was omitted in the training to be had in the monastic schools; and once more, those Protestant writers—apologists of Henry VIII. by the way!—loudly lament the loss of works which would prove of much practical utility in every age: treating of the mechanical arts and of agriculture; as well as of Painting, Music, and Letters; not to mention the

Sciences of Theology and Philosophy, in which the monastic schoolmen so excelled.[5]

So manifest was this social disaster caused by the plunder of the monasteries, that Henry VIII. himself felt bound to make some effort to cope with the evil by establishing in England certain educational institutions with endowments from the Crown. A similar attempt was made in Ireland in the course of time; but in neither country might anyone undertake to instruct the young unless licensed to do so by the State, and willing to propagate the new heresies among the helpless children. However, so determined were the Irish people in resisting this dangerous and cowardly means of proselytism, that, in the end, it became a "felony" for the Faithful to have their children educated at all. Still while the colleges founded by Henry VIII. and his immediate successor proved—as Protestant historians of the period openly admit—a humiliating failure; the outlawed Irish friars and monks, in their hiding-places through the country, were the hope of the persecuted Catholics for the education of the young. And we know how their heroic services in this respect also were gloriously acknowledged by their pious clients' zeal in defence of the ancient Faith.

We need not pause to consider the Suppression as the sacrilegious invasion of our Western Thebaid. The subject is too full of horror regarded from this point of view. Even the indignation of one of the most hostile of the modern critics of the Catholic Church is aroused at the thought of the destruction of those many homes of penance and prayer, alluded to by him as having been: "the Golgotha of true souls departed—Heaven's watch-towers of our fathers, built for a most real and serious purpose—the arena where earnest men worked their life-wrestle in sight of heaven and earth and hell."[6]

[5] "Scoti-Monasticon" (quoted). [6] Carlyle, "Past and Present" (quoted.)

Realising as they did so clearly the object of their own being (the end of their sacred calling), to the religious themselves how far more awful must the Suppression have appeared ! It was not for them to inquire into the Divine Decree permitting this dread trial to test the constancy of the Irish Church ; nor did it matter to them at all, knowing that in His Own good time and way God would direct the sufferings of so many of His loyal servants to further the glory of His all-holy Name. . . . That same generation of Christian Confessors beheld the much reviled monastic profession assume yet more irresistible attractions for countless young Irishmen who had escaped to the Continent ; the happy parents of many of those children meeting death triumphantly because of their allegiance to the proscribed Faith.

Were they not so pre-occupied with the duties of their sacred ministry—we have given frequent instances of their unremitting missionary zeal—the now homeless monks and friars could not have failed to observe " the signs of the times " in the after-careers of their persecutors, the Divine Vengeance having at length overtaken the profaners of their beloved " Thebaid." The King's principal agents in the work of sacrilege soon lost favour with that fickle monarch ; and either ended their lives on the scaffold or died in obscurity and disgrace. Henry the Eighth's own punishment on earth—after he had experienced nothing but vanity in what he had secured at the peril of his soul—was a truly pitiable remorse of conscience, which even the most partial of his biographers find it hard to distinguish from the abject cowardice of despair.

Unhappily his death did not ward off England's threatened spiritual ruin ; or stay the cruel persecution of the Irish Faithful. The Suppression of the English monasteries had brought about one result eagerly desired by Henry VIII. : the credulous ignorant masses passively submitted to the forfeiture of their Faith, persuading

themselves that their King's defection from Rome was on a mere political issue, which could have no vital bearing upon their own spiritual interests—especially since they knew they would have to suffer the severest legal penalities, or conform to the newly established order of things. Another generation found it still less difficult to accept the doctrine promulgated by the State. And when it became known in England that the Irish people were still persevering in a struggle begun in their father's time, it was looked upon in the light of rebellion : loyal subjects would not thus defy the Act of Parliament, and the monarch's supreme will. To this epoch, particularly, some writers would trace the deeply-rooted national antipathy to the Irish race—with, perhaps, unconscious envy, because our ancestors succeeded in retaining what the forefathers of the English people themselves had lost—a lamentable trait which the enlightenment of modern times is, comparatively, but beginning to remove.

Of course the priests both in England and Scotland were by no means indifferent to the calamity of the Suppression ; but the efforts of heroic Confessors among them could not prevail against the self-interest blinding the people of both these countries to the value of the Treasure of which they were being deprived. In Ireland the fervour of the Faithful, and their devotedness to the suffering servants of God saved them from a like sad fate ; nay, the greater the sacrifices they were called upon to make, the more dearly they prized their glorious heritage of Christian Truth. While alluding incidentally to the nature of some of these sacrifices, we have explained how in so living up to the traditions of their race our ancestors did their own part in confirming the nation's claim to a title hallowed in the East since the time of the Apostles ; and in the West, from the very first ages of our ancient Irish Church.

# A MAP
## of
## "MONASTIC IRELAND"

( originally published in Dublin )

*A.D. 1786.*

ATLANTIC OCEAN

IRISH CHANNEL

DONEGAL 4 · SLIGO · LEITRIM 11 · CAVAN 12 · ARMAGH 7 · MONAGHAN 6 · FERMANAGH 5 · TYRONE 4 · LONDONDERRY 2 · ANTRIM 3 · DOWN 8 · NEWRY · LOUTH 13 · MEATH 17 · DUBLIN 21 · KILDARE 20 · WESTMEATH 16 · KING'S 19 · QUEEN'S 25 · KILKENNY 27 · CARLOW 28 · WEXFORD 29 · WICKLOW 26 · WATERFORD 32 · TIPPERARY 24 · LIMERICK 23 · CLARE 22 · GALWAY 18 · MAYO 9 · ROSCOMMON 14 · LONGFORD 15 · CASTLEBAR · CASHEL · CORK 31 · KERRY 30

Tory I. · Rathlin I. · Cape Cantyre · Fairland Pt. · Malin · Glenarm · Belfast · Newtown · Lough Neagh · Lough Foyle · Londonderry · Coleraine · Carrickfergus · Muckamore · Antrim · Masarene · Donaghmore · Dungannon · Omagh · Enniskillen · Clogher · Armagh · Dromore · Downpatrick · Strangford Lough · Carlingford Bay · Dundalk · Drogheda · Clones · Castleblayney · Inishkeel · Inver · Kilmacrenan · Moville · Lough Swilly · Lough Foyle · Tyrhugh · Clanmacken · Maghera · Dunluce · Ballycastle · Kells · Connor · Larne · Maville · Lambeg · Drumbo · Banbridge · Newry · Castle Blayney · Inishkeel · Kilmacduagh · Kilmacrenan · Raphoe · Lifford · Strabane · Derry · Dungiven · Aghadoe · Kilmacduagh · Kilmore · Kilcolman · Loughrea · Tuam · Athenry · Galway · Galway Bay · Corrowmore · Kilmacduagh · Kilfenora · Kilshanny · Ennistymon · Inishcaltaire · Tomgranny · Killaloe · Ennis · Clare · Quin · Six Mile B. · Finish. · Inistua I. · Kilnagalee · Inishcattery · Ashcroton · Rathkeel · Shannon River · Inishlaghlin · Adair · Carrigogunnel · Monigret · Abington · Kilcolman · Toome · Limerick · Monasternenagh · Kilreel · Miltown · Greany · Tipperary · Athassel · Cashel · Ardfinnan · Clonmel · Carrick on Suir · Tipperary · Fethard · Killenaule · Callan · Kells · Kilkenny · Thomastown · Knocktopher · Inistioge · New Ross · Waterford · Wexford Haven · Wexford · Tintern · Dunbrody · Carnsore · Kilmacow · Ballyhack · Passage · Dunmore · Tramore · Dungarvan · Youghal · Youghal Bay · Cork · Middleton · Great Isle · Cork Harbour · Kinsale · Kinsale Harbour · Ross · Abbey Mahon · Timoleague · Bantry Bay · Bantry · Abbey Strume · Glengariffe Bay · Cape Clear I. · Baltimore Bay · Irishtown · Skelligs Rocks · Valentia Isle · Dingle Bay or Castlemain Harbour · Dingle · Tralee · Inisfallen · Agadoe · Kenmare River · Ballynahinch · Lough Corrib · Inishmain · Cong · Shruel · Aghaseragh · Ballinrobe · Ballinasmale · Castlebar · Clew Bay · Achil Islands · Inishbofin · Inishturk · Clare I. · Inis Bofin · Killala · Ballina · Rathbran · Bofsian · Moyne · Kilrove · Crofsmalin · Crofs · Tarmancarra · The Muilet · Ardnary · Roscrick · Templehouse · Ballympte · Clonmeacher · Athenry · Kilmacduagh · Kilmacow · Kilmacshane · Kilmacduagh · Kilmacow · Kilmacshane · Kilmacduagh · Kilmacow · Kilmacshane

# INDEX.

## ABBREVIATIONS.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A.S. | = Ancient Sanctuary. | F. | = Co. Fermanagh. |
| Aug. | = Augustinians. | G. | = Co. Galway. |
| Ben. | = Benedictines. | K. | = Co. Kerry. |
| Car. | = Carmelites. | Ki. | = Co. Kildare. |
| Cis. | = Cistercians. | Kk. | = Co. Kilkenny. |
| C.R. | = Canons Regular. | Kg. | = King's County. |
| D.C. | = Discalced Carmelites. | L. | = Co. Leitrim. |
| | | Li. | = Co. Limerick. |
| Dom. | = Dominicans. | Lo. | = Co. Longford. |
| Fran. | = Franciscans. | Lh. | = Co. Louth. |
| K.H. | = Knights Hospitaller. | M. | = Co. Mayo. |
| Nor. | = Norbertines. | Me. | = Co. Meath. |
| Tri. | = Trinitarians. | Mo. | = Co. Monaghan. |
| A. | = Co. Antrim. | Q. | = Queen's County. |
| Ar. | = Co. Armagh. | R. | = Co. Roscommon. |
| C. | = Co. Carlow. | S. | = Co. Sligo. |
| Ca. | = Co. Cavan. | T. | = Co. Tipperary. |
| Cl. | = Co. Clare. | Ty. | = Co. Tyrone. |
| Co. | = Co. Cork. | W. | = Co. Waterford. |
| D. | = Co. Derry. | We. | = Co. Wexford. |
| Do. | = Co. Donegal. | Wi. | = Co. Wicklow. |
| Dn. | = Co. Down. | Wm. | = Co. Westmeath. |
| Du. | = Co. Dublin. | | |

NOTE.—For the interesting origin of so many Irish names of places, the reader is referred to Dr. Joyce's important work on this subject. Here we merely indicate the meaning of those Irish prefixes which occur more frequently; and it is necessary to remark that various modifications of the same prefix are to be found in the anglicised form of the root-word so employed. For example, *cill*, a church, is also written *kl*, *kill*, *cell*, *ceall*, *keel*, and *kyle*: upwards of three thousand Irish names beginning with one or other form of this word alone.

("Irish Names of Places," Joyce—Dublin, A.D. 1870—p. 302):—

"Achad,"=a field.
"Ard,"=high, etc.
"Ath,"=a ford,
"Baile" (Bally),=a town, &c.
"Clan,"=a tribe, etc.
"Cluain" (Cloon),=an insulated meadow.
"Cor,"=a round hill.
"Disert,"=a desert, a hermitage.
"Dom.—Domach,"=a church.
"Druim" (Drum),=the back, a hill-ridge, etc,
"Dun" (Doon),=a fortified residence.
"Inis,"=an island.
"Kill,"=a church.
"Lios,"=(liss), a mound, etc.
"Loch,"=a lake.
"Rath,"=a circular fort.
"Ros,"=a peninsula, a wood.
"Teagh, teach, or tigh," (tee), a house, etc.
"Temple,"—teampull (tampul)=a church.
"Tobar,"=a well,
"Tulach" (tullagh),=a little hill.

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